

Our Father

A HANDBOOK FOR MEDITATION



*For biblical quotations
the version of
Monsignor Ronald Knox
was used*

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Our Father

A HANDBOOK FOR MEDITATION

Compiled and edited by

KARL BECKER AND MARIE PETER

Translated from the German by Ruth Mary Bethell



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Preface



THE PLAN FOR THIS BOOK grew out of numerous discussions with the publishers, in war-time. Since then, the proverbial nine years have gone by, not at all to the detriment of the work. A year ago, Dr. Maria Peter joined me and gave it new impetus. It was no easy matter to make our selection from among the immense abundance of texts on the Lord's Prayer and to produce yet one more book among the countless works that already exist on this theme. We hope nonetheless that our handbook will be a real incentive to Christian piety. A number of texts are reproduced or made accessible here for the first time, while others have already appeared in print. What so often struck us was the one constant voice through the centuries, especially when it came from those who undoubtedly knew nothing or very little of what others had said.

Selection was naturally more or less personal; other people would have wanted other texts. It is meant as a handbook, a book for the home, so it was permissible to simplify in some cases. The texts and explanations offered here are not intended as sources of information but as guides to prayer. It is not a book to be read consecutively; it needs thinking over, it should be meditated, one short section at a time, morning or evening. It is primarily intended for people who long to sit at the feet of Our Lord and hear his word, people who in these days of rush and hurry wish to recollect themselves in God. Often quite a small section is sufficient to bring to mind the fullness and depth of the Lord's Prayer, and to help us to live out of its abundance again.

PREFACE

As the book is intended to be read a passage at a time and not consecutively, the ordering of the quotations and texts has been done chronologically rather than according to context. This may seem unsystematic, and does in fact bring like and unlike together. But we see how the same ideas crop up repeatedly in quite different periods and in quite different forms, making us feel how surely they correspond to the movement and rhythm of the prayer itself. Moreover the chronological order gives a bird's eye view of Christian piety through the centuries, providing examples for the short history of "Our Father" commentaries, sketched in Chapter One, Section Three.

This is an instructive book too, revealing the riches Christ gathered together in this prayer of his. It should be useful for Bible circles, group and parish work, and above all it should stimulate teachers to more intensive reading. In spite of the abundance of authors quoted, it represents only a very small proportion of all that theologians and saints, thinkers and men of prayer, poets, writers and popular tradition have had to say about the Lord's Prayer. Naturally, most of the authors belong to the Christian Western world. Texts from Slavonic authors are almost wholly lacking, although no doubt these would have provided much fruitful material.

KARL BECKER, *Dr. Theol.*

Freiburg, Germany
All Saints, 1950

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction



I. TEXTUAL HISTORY OF THE OUR FATHER

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven;
give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive them that trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

[MATT. 6:9-13]

Father;
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our sins;
we too forgive all those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation.

[LUKE 11:2-5]

For English-speaking Christians it is the St. Matthew text that is in current use.

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespass
as we forgive them that trespass against us,
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

[TWELVE-APOSTLE TEACHING (DIDACHE) VIII, 2]

Father,
may thy Holy Spirit come upon us and purify us;
thy kingdom come;
thy bread, as needful, give us daily;
and forgive us our sins
(for we too forgive them that trespass against us);
and let us not be led into temptation.

[MARCION]

There are two "Our Father" texts in the Gospels consisting in words of Our Lord, teaching his disciples how to pray. One passage (Matt. 6:9-13) has its setting in the Sermon on the Mount, among the Beatitudes and those mysterious remarks of Our Lord concerning his followers, words that confer a charge and a mission: "You are the salt of the earth"; "You are the light of the world," with directives for fasting, loving enemies, and other rules of our Lord for living a Christian life in the spirit of the Gospels—so different from the Jewish laws. Here we note the recurrent phrase: "It was said . . . but I tell you," stressing the contrast to the Jewish ethic and introducing the new one.

Then we are told where to pray: not in Synagogues or at street corners, but in an inner room with the door shut. And the Gospel prayer is brief, a contrast to the wordiness of heathen prayers, for instance Babylonian hymns which used to go in for elaborate ornamentation, or the letter-play of the magic papyri. Christian prayer is short, differing once more from Jewish custom, where the Rabbis gave preference to lengthy prayer. "Our Father" was proposed to the disciples as a model—"this, then, is to be your prayer"; that is to say, "no one has the right to add words and phrases to the existing ones, as though they were coins to barter with; that is a bad and arbitrary kind of freedom; but the prayer permits only that inner freedom native to the spirit of it; it must be taken as a whole, as a venture to pray to God in personal terms" (Lohmeyer).

"Our Father" consists of a salutation and seven petitions, to which "Amen" is added in a few later manuscripts, and sometimes the so-called "doxology," a prayer-ending consisting of words of praise: "thine is the power and the glory forever." The doxology is borrowed from the Old Testament, I Chron. 29:10, from David's prayer: "Thine, Lord, the magnificence, thine the power, splendour and glory and majesty are thine; to thee all that is in heaven, all that is on earth, belongs, to thee the kingdom." The Lord's Prayer with the doxology added was in liturgical use in earliest times, as the so-called "Didache" shows; this is the oldest monument of Christian literature after the New Testament, a model catechism entitled: "Teaching of the Lord through the twelve Apostles to the heathen." The two-fold doxology of the Didache gave rise to a three-fold form in the Chrysostom liturgy, adding the kingdom to the power and the glory. In the Gothic translation of the Bible by the Arian Bishop Ulfilas, the Lord's Prayer ends with this expression of praise and thanksgiving, which has remained in several liturgies. Luther's German translation of the Bible included it, and it became the normal form of prayer for Protestants in Germany, and in England, too. One old Christian document has in the

place of the doxology the exclamation, "O Lord Christ!" It is an Egyptian amulet-inscription, a fine example of the sense of spiritual fellowship that distinguished early Christianity.

The "Amen" is an addition from later manuscripts. It is lacking in the more important Greek texts but is to be found in the Vulgate (the official Latin form of the Bible), and in many commentaries is the occasion for joyful affirmation of the prayer as a whole. Thus Cyril of Jerusalem says: "After completing the prayer you say 'Amen,' sealing it with that Amen, that is to say, may the whole of this prayer taught by God be efficacious." And modern elucidations of the prayer say, likewise: "This Amen is Jesus' royal seal, valid in his kingdom, Amen, it is so, truly" (Lüthy). The "Amen" has become current in the liturgy and in the Catholic rite it is added to every Our Father. In the Roman Mass it is reserved for the priest to say after the last petition.

Luke 11:2-4, gives us a shorter text than St. Matthew's. Jesus was teaching his disciples, and said it for them at their special request. "St. Luke's 'Our Father' has not the same careful balance as St. Matthew's, either in form or in content. In the latter, three petitions concern God, three concern human needs; and between these two halves there is the fourth petition, as intermediary, turning human need into divine grace. In St. Luke this has disappeared; only the first two are about things relating to God, the three last are about the burdens and dangers that press upon worshippers" (Lohmeyer). —St. Luke's version differs from St. Matthew's in the salutation, which is only "Father," and in the absence of the third and seventh petitions; in the place of "trespasses" it has "sins." But intrinsically St. Luke means the same as St. Matthew. The term "trespassers," more exactly "debtors," in St. Matthew came from the world of commerce into Jewish religion, and hence into the New Testament. St. Luke simply selected for the same purpose a term more comprehensible to the Christians of heathen origin, i.e., the gentiles. In all St. Luke manuscripts the doxology is lacking.

And the third petition which St. Luke omits is so closely related to the first and second that it can be spared without affecting the train of thought. To do God's will is to hallow his name. And it is not possible for anyone to pray "thy kingdom come" who is not in a position to pray "thy will be done." Augustine had this in mind when he taught in his "Little Handbook" that "Luke shows that the third petition to some extent repeats the first two, and declares it by leaving it out." And the absence of the seventh petition is not so serious when it is seen as a positive sequel to the sixth, which is more negative in trend. That is how Tertullian saw it. He said "*And lead us not into temptation* is answered by *but deliver us from evil* by way of commentary." Nonetheless the solemn double ending of the prayer is lost without it.

Another reading that has come down through a few early writers (Marcion, Gregory of Nyssa, Maximus Confessor), gives as the second petition of the St. Luke "Our Father" an invocation to the Holy Spirit: "May thy holy spirit come down upon us and purify us." It is not one of the original petitions, but "remains a later form shaped by an early Christian community on a tradition based on Old Testament and Jewish expectations, which saw in the work of the Baptist and of Jesus the sign of impending eschatological fulfilment and the approach to it, and hopefully awaited the Spirit that would come and purify them" (Lohmeyer). The relation between John's prayer and John's baptism, and Christian prayer and Christian baptism, is still more evident in the old Christian baptismal rite, which directs that "after baptism the neophyte is to say the prayer the Lord taught us"; this is to be found in the "Apostolic Constitutions," which are ecclesiastical, liturgical, moral and legal directives of the 4th century. The Holy Spirit petition was also intended as a link between baptism and anointing or confirmation. In early Christian times confirmation was administered immediately after baptism, and according to Chrysostom the imparting of the Holy Spirit was done by means of

a special rite set between baptism by water, and the Eucharist. As we shall see, immediately after baptism, the neophytes prayed the Lord's Prayer. According to Chrysostom the praying of the "Our Father" postulates the imparting of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit petition of St. Luke's text has a spiritual significance and can be taken to mean that the coming of the kingdom of God into the world consists in the divine working of the Holy Spirit, inwardly transforming those praying, so that God may begin to reign in them. The proximity of God's kingdom and the Holy Spirit is proclaimed in the second petition. When the disciples asked Jesus whether he would build up the kingdom of Israel again in his time, he answered that it was not theirs to know the time and the hour. He promised them the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:6 ff.), without giving them a direct answer to their question.

The essential connection with baptism and confirmation of the two "Our Father" petitions, and the Holy Spirit petition, has always been present in the mind of the Church and constantly reaffirmed in the teaching of the Fathers. "The hallowing of God's name is the in-pouring of the Holy Spirit" (Paschasius Radbertus).—"To hallow God's name is to be taken out of heathendom and as Christ's faithful to be gathered from all four corners of the earth and baptized to the forgiveness of sins. Such hallowing is the true hallowing of the name of God" (Rupert v. Deutz).—The Holy Spirit petition rings out in the Church in the Latin hymns: "Veni, Creator Spiritus" and "Veni, Sancte Spiritus," right down to an old German pre-reformation hymn: "*Komm, Heiliger Geist, Herre, Gott!*"

The petition for "sufficient bread" deserves a mention. The Greek word for "sufficient" occurs in the Gospels only in connection with the word "bread" and even in antiquity it was given different explanations. It was read as "daily," "constant," "necessary," but also, in elucidation of St. Luke's text, and ac-

cording to the translation of the so-called "Hebrew Gospel"* "for to-morrow," "for the next day."

In his translation of the Bible, St. Jerome rendered the word as "supernatural" and saw it as "the Bread that is above all being and all creation," "the choice bread of the Christian, namely Christ himself." He thus gave currency to a spiritual meaning of the bread petition, but this was already a common interpretation before his day and was taken for granted throughout the times of the Fathers. Origen, who tended to spiritualize everything, taught that the bread that nourishes the true man is the wisdom and truth of God. Marcion read "our bread" as "thy bread," which also narrowed down the possibility of a literal interpretation. To solve the problem of whether to read "today's" or "tomorrow's" or "future" bread, one group of scholars attempted to explain St. Matthew's text as a morning prayer in which bread for "today" was asked for, St. Luke's text, which seemed to admit of a translation as "bread for the future," being suitable for use at any time. It would thus be more appropriate as an evening prayer, when bread "for to-morrow" is asked for. If St. Luke stresses that we are praying "for tomorrow" or "for every day," it is not redundant, because of the basic intention, which is that we make known to God our need not only for one day but for the whole of our earthly life. Special forethought for a long succession of days is not indicated. Our Lord expressly forbade such forethought in the Sermon on the Mount, warning Christians not to fret over tomorrow (Matt. 6:34). Believing trust is the basic attitude required of those who pray the Lord's Prayer, an attitude that releases attention from human cares and opens men's eyes to the providence of God. "When the Lord would have thee ask for today, he thereby forbids thee to fret about tomorrow; as though he

* The Hebrew or Nazareth Gospel is an apocryphal gospel known to Clement of Alexandria, Eusebius, Origen and Jerome, written in Aramaic, translated by Jerome into Latin and Greek.

said to thee: He who gives thee the day bestows on thee what belongs to the day. Who lets the sun rise? Who scatters and drives off the darkness of night? Who shows thee the radiance of light? Who sets the heavens in movement all round, so that light may shine on earth? Does he who gives thee this, and more as great, need thy help to give thy body what it needs?" (Gregory of Nyssa).—All attempts at translation reflect this tension between the idea of bread sufficient for sustaining earthly life and that of heavenly bread for the salvation of the soul and eternal life. They reflect also the view of the fourth petition as the spiritual center of the prayer, "which is like a spiritual ladder upon which man can climb up out of the low places of his life into divine heights. Not to remain there, but to return fortified to the low places of his life in order to carry out the divine will better than he did before" (B. Martin).

A few St. Matthew manuscripts use the past tense in the fifth petition, "Forgive us our trespass as we forgave," whereas St. Luke's text has the present form "forgive" throughout. St. Luke shows more the readiness to forgive, whereas St. Matthew claims that he has forgiven and it is now God's turn to forgive. It takes a very pedantic interpretation to discover any essential difference here. The spiritual attitude required is the same in both cases, namely one of readiness to forgive. The petitioner must be reminded that his prayer would be hopeless if it lacked willingness to forgive. To forgive and to obtain forgiveness are one closed circle, as St. John Chrysostom describes it: "From the heart of the petition issues a stream of forgiveness and it flows back as forgiveness."

After this glance at the various possible textual forms of the "Our Father," we naturally ask how our Lord himself worded his prayer. We observe two different versions, and it may be possible that neither comes directly from our Lord as he spoke it, but that the evangelists received their texts through the oral tradition of their communities. But this does not exclude the possibility that Jesus gave both versions, one in the Sermon on



the Mount (Matt.), which was put together by the evangelists out of a number of more or less disconnected sayings of our Lord, the other at the request of the disciples wanting Jesus to teach them to pray.

It is quite possible that our Lord repeated the prayer more often than the twice we know of, in teaching or in praying. The shorter form (Luke) has more claim to be the earlier one than the rounded prayer in St. Matthew.

An outstanding Protestant theologian of the liberal period, A. von Harnack, held the view that the "Our Father" as Jesus taught it consisted only of the first three petitions. That is a possibility, too. In that case one of the versions, perhaps the very first, only contained the first three petitions. So deep and comprehensive is the prayer, it may well have been preceded by prayerful meditation on the part of our Lord, producing the second half after a lapse of time, when he had already taught the first half.

What we need to remember is that St. Luke, the Greek, offers the shorter form, that St. Matthew conforms more closely to a Jewish model, the so-called "Eighteen Prayer" (cf. below). Moreover we should observe that the differences between Matthew and Luke are not such that one excludes the other; they are not contradictions. The additions to later MSS mostly have their origin in the liturgy. The oral tradition of the Church is based chiefly on the Matthew text in the form in which it found acceptance in the Vulgate, was taken into the Canon of the Roman Mass, and used as a basic text for translations.

2. "OUR FATHER" IN RELIGIOUS HISTORY

In the "Didache" people are advised to pray the "Our Father" thrice daily. This is not the only occasion on which Jewish custom was carried on. Even the form of the Lord's Prayer has a considerable likeness to related Jewish prayer-

forms. The subject matter of the petitions runs all through the Old Testament, pointing to the coming of Christ, Christ who made the completion of the Lord's Prayer finally possible. Already known was the mode of addressing God as Father: God was called "Father of the People of Israel:" "Is he not thy father, that hath possessed thee, and made thee and created thee?" (Deut. 32:6). The hallowing of God's name, of his Being, is proclaimed in the Decalogue, and is a recurrent theme of the Old Testament: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that shall take the name of the Lord his God in vain" (Exod. 20:7). — "Profane not my holy name, that I may be sanctified in the midst of the children of Israel. I am the Lord who sanctify you" (Lev. 22:32). The same is true of the proclamation of Jehovah's supremacy: "The Lord hath reigned, he is clothed with beauty" (Ps. 92:1). David's penitential psalms and many passages from the Prophets contain a great acknowledgement of sin and guilt: "If our iniquities have testified against us, O Lord, do thou it for thy name's sake, for our rebellions are many: we have sinned against thee. . . . forsake us not" (Jer. 14:7, 9). The prayer for bread and life's necessities, as found in numerous passages of the Old Testament, mysteriously conceals and reveals hunger for God's word under cover of material requirements, without ever doing away with concern for daily bread, or the gift of God that supplies it. And the Psalms give impressive witness to the petitions for ransom and deliverance.

Thus the content of the petitions is scattered throughout the books of the Old Testament; besides this there is a prayer-formula from late Judaic times, where they come together in a form approximating to the Lord's Prayer with a few additional petitions. It is the "*Prayer of the eighteen Praises*," called "Eighteen Prayer" for short. The exact age of the formula is contested; and it certainly did not always occur in the forms in which we have it from the first century A.D. One group of scholars traces it back to the time of the Macchabees (2nd and

1st century B.C.) Certain scholars believe they have discovered a basic form of seven petitions. If so, as far as number-symbolism is concerned, a correspondence would be established—a very important factor in the history of religion. But we do not possess this surmised “early form” of the Jewish prayer and can compare the Gospel text only with the “Eighteen Prayer” as we know it today, which runs as follows:

1. Praise

Lord, open my lips!
May my mouth utter thy praise!
Be thou glorified, Lord,
Thou our God
and God of our fathers!
God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,
thou great, strong, fearful God,
thou highest God,
thou Creator of heaven and earth,
thou our shield,
and our fathers' shield,
thou our refuge from generation to generation!
Glory be to thee, Lord,
thou shield of Abraham!

2. Praise

Thou art very strong,
thou dost bring low the proud.
Thou art so powerful,
thou dost hold judgment over the defiant.
Thou livest in eternity,
awakenest the dead.
Thou dost make the winds blow,
the dew come down.
Thou dost care for the living,
revive the dying.
Glory be to thee, Lord,
who dost revive the dying!

3. Praise

Thou art so holy,
and dreadful is thy Name.
Apart from thee there is no other God.
Glory be to thee, Lord,
thou holy God!

4. Petition

Our Father, give us
of thy grace knowledge of thee,
out of thy law understanding and wisdom!
Glory be to thee, Lord,
who of thy grace givest knowledge!

5. Petition

Lord, bring us back to thee!
We want to be converted.
Renew our days as formerly!
Glory be to thee, Lord,
who lovest conversion!

6. Petition

Forgive us, Father!
We sinned against thee.
Wipe out our misdeeds!
Set them out of thy sight!
For rich is thy mercy.
Glory be to thee, Lord,
who art rich in forgiveness!

7. Petition

Behold our distress!
Lead us in battle!
Deliver us for thy Name's sake!
Glory be to thee, Lord,
Deliverer of Israel!

8. Petition

Heal us, Lord our God,
of the torment of our hearts,
and remove from us
pain and grief!
Bring healing to our wounds!
Glory be to thee, Lord,
who healest the sick
of thy people Israel!

9. Petition

Ah, bless us, Lord, our God,
in this year that all may be well
in all kinds of produce!
Bring quickly near
the final year of our deliverance!
and give dew and rain to the earth!
Make the world full
with the treasures of thy goodness!
Give blessing too to the works of our hands!
Glory be to thee, Lord,
who dost bless the years!

10. Petition

Blow loud upon the trumpet
to our release!
Raise a banner
to the rally of our exiles!
Glory be to thee, Lord,
who dost gather together the scattered of thy
people Israel!

11. Petition

Make our judges to be as they were at first
and our counsellors as at the beginning!
Rule over us, thou alone!
Glory be to thee, Lord,
thou lover of justice!

12. Imprecation (or curse or malediction)

May none of the confident plans of our persecutors
flourish!

Uproot quickly in our days
the kingdom of the proud!
May Nazarites and others who went astray
perish in a moment!
They are blotted out of the book of the living,
and they shall not be recorded with the faithful!
Glory be to thee, Lord,
who dost humble the insolent!

13. Petition

But living be thy love toward pious strangers!
Grant us a good reward
as those who do thy will alone!
Glory be to thee, Lord,
thou trust of the faithful!

14. Petition

Have mercy now, Lord, our God,
in the abundance of thy mercy,
upon Israel, thy people,
and thy city Jerusalem
and Sion, the abode of thy glory,
and thy temple, thy dwelling,
and upon the kingdom of the house of David,
who dost build up Jerusalem!

15. Petition

Lord, our God!
Hear the voice of our prayer!
Have mercy on us!
Thou art indeed a merciful and gracious God.
Glory be to thee, Lord,
who hearest prayer!

16. Petition

Lord, our God,
May thou dwell in Sion again,
and may thy servants serve thee
in Jerusalem!
Glory be to thee, Lord,
whom we would serve in dread!

17. Thanksgiving

We thank thee;
Thou, Lord, art our God
and the God of our fathers—
for all thy goodness, for the grace,
for the mercy,
that thou hast ever rendered to us and shown us
and before us, to our fathers.
And should we say:
“Lo, our foot is stumbling,”
may thy grace uphold us, Lord.
Glory be to thee, Lord!
Thanks be given thee.

18. Petition

Grant thy peace over Israel, thy people,
and over thy city, as over thy heritage!
And bless us all as one man!
Glory be to thee, Lord,
who dost bring peace into being!*

The pagan world, too, had significant prayers that correspond to some degree to the “Our Father” petitions. But they belong to very various periods and places, and hitherto no covering formula has been found. Prayers like the third petition, for instance, are traceable in Greek and Roman religion, in the terms, “As God will,” or “according to the will of the

* Translated from the German text of P. Riessler: *Old Jewish non-biblical books* (Augsburg, 1928).

gods." And the idea of forgiveness of sins, and praying for it, is not limited to the Bible either but is common to several ancient religions and is found in very early poetry. Many primitive and ancient peoples honour God as "Father." What is set out and prophesied in the sacred books of the chosen people of God in the Old Testament, is dimly surmised in pre-Christian pagan writings. The fulfillment of the prophecies was Christ, and intrinsic to the new life that dawned through him and in him, was the new form of prayer, embracing in its brevity all that moves the heart of man.

In Christian times, the Islamic religion has an opening prayer in the first Sura of the Koran, named "Fatihah," which does constitute a parallel with its two parts, seven-fold verses, and underlying ideas, so similar to Christian ideas. In its frequent use the "Fatihah" is reminiscent of the main prayer of Christendom, too. As the Moslem prayer developed under the influence of the older religions of revelation, with traces of the Lord's Prayer in it, there is a possibility that the first *Sura* prayer is to some extent modeled on the "Our Father." At times Mohammed himself was well disposed towards Christianity. The first half of the prayer belongs to Allah, the second to his servant. The "merciful One who has pity" corresponds to "Our Father," the "Lord of the worlds" to "heaven," "praise be to Allah," to "hallowed be thy Name"; for the divine will, we have Allah as "Lord of the Day of Judgment." Mohammed turns the petition for daily bread into the generalized, "we beg thee for help"; the three last petitions are covered by the petition "for right guidance."

Al Fatihah

In the name of God, the merciful, the One who has pity,
All praise be to God, the Lord of the worlds,
to the merciful, the One who has pity,
to the King on the Day of Judgment.
To thee alone we pray,

thee alone we invoke for help,
Guide us along the way, the straight way,
the way of those upon whom thou hast sent down thy blessing,
and not of those upon whom thy indignation has descended
and who go astray.

3. A BRIEF HISTORY OF "OUR FATHER" COMMENTARIES

There is hardly another theme in Christian literature that has been so often treated and so variously, as the "Our Father," in preaching and catechizing, in learned treatises, in letters, in prayer-books and books of edification, as well as poetry, painting and music. Every period and every country where the Gospel was preached seized upon the Lord's Prayer as a very precious possession, to be elucidated, to be understood as intrinsically a revelation of God, to be treasured and taken to heart and prayed in the heart's own language. Much that is fine, true and inspiring has been written, but also much that is distressing, laying bare the wounds of the times. The working of the Holy Spirit is clearly to be traced in the testimony to the unity of truth among a variety of witnesses, when the simple words of the prayer are allowed to manifest God in all his holy, blessed breadth and depth. So much can be included in the narrow frame of the "Our Father," with its salutation and the seven petitions. Every age and every individual find something appropriate in it, and thus the following pages amount to a short account of Christian devotional literature through the centuries.

a) Christian Antiquity

The important place occupied by the "Our Father" in the liturgy of early Christian times corresponds to the deep reverence in which this divine prayer was held, as a number of il-

luminating commentaries prove. In the early centuries it was subject to the "Arcane discipline," and its words and elucidation had to be kept secret. Only those who belonged to the Church and those in process of becoming members knew the text of it and were initiated into its full meaning in preparation for baptism. Thus the oldest "Our Father" commentaries are catechetical instructions for candidates for baptism. The Eastern and Western Church competed in throwing light on the mysteriously plain yet hidden truth of the "Our Father" and the seven petitions, making the light of Christ shine as a light for man's life, too.

The oldest commentary that has come down to us is from *Tertullian* (c.160-222). In his treatise "On Prayer" he refers to the words of the "Our Father," but without explaining the petitions in detail. He took the "Our Father" as a whole, as indeed it is, as each petition is included in the whole, and the whole in each petition. The same high spirituality that characterizes all Tertullian's writings is found here too, with even a certain over-stressing of the spiritual side. He expresses longing for liberation from earthly things and from the world. This gives rise to an exaggeratedly strict moral code and a passionate expectation of the last days and the dawn of God's ultimate reign.

Tertullian's pupil *Cyprian* (d.258), Martyr-Bishop of Carthage, outstripped his master. He was a holy Father of the Church, a true teacher of the way of life, a shepherd who loved souls and who, with all his positive concern for the supremacy of the spiritual, had great insight into the hearts of men and their fallibility. He restored the balance where Tertullian was one-sided. His whole concern was Christian worship. Christ, and what passed on into the Church Sacraments after his Ascension, were for him the heart of the "Our Father," and not only of prayer, but of life too. He saw that to live the "Our Father" is to partake of God's holiness, revealing the purpose of salvation.

The attitude of the Greek Church, and of the School of Alexandria in particular, is seen in *Origen's* commentaries (185-254). Their basic idea is that men must become divine. His treatise "On Prayer" is drenched with the whole culture of late Greek times. It was a ripe culture that had reached the term of its development, culminating in the acceptance of redemption of thought and being through Christ and in devotion to divine revelation. To foster this is the purport of Origen's "Our Father" study. His elucidation of the Father-Son relation is impressive and profound. According to Holy Scripture, the Son is "image of the invisible God," "image of the Creator," "emblem of what is heavenly." Christ is the prototype of God's Son; the Old Testament characters were models whose deeds were pre-tokens of the redemption; and we are likenesses or images of God, we the sanctified, the baptized. In this manner all the petitions of the prayer are related by Origen to the divinization of man.

As in Origen, in *Gregory of Nyssa* (died c.394) thoughts and words recur to remind us of our likeness to God, preparing souls to venture to undertake the ascent to God. "Who will give me the wings of a dove?" he wrote at the head of his "Our Father" commentary. Gregory's efforts go beyond Origen and served to spread the eastern monastic ideal. Gregory was in fact the brother of St. Basil, the "Father of eastern monasticism."

The second School of Theology in Christian antiquity, after Alexandria, was Antioch; their respective interpretations of the Lord's Prayer bring clearly to view the dividing line between two modes of thought. The tendency to allegory was not preconized in Antioch and the importance of this school of theology lies in its faithfulness to biblical wording, a characteristic that marks the commentaries of Theodore of Mopsuestia (350-428) and St. John Chrysostom (354-407). The Pauline idea of God's friendliness to man and the Johannine idea of the merciful love of the Father are paramount in the commentaries of *St. Cyril of Jerusalem* (d.386), whose "Mys-

tagogical Catecheses" is one of the most profound works that have come down to us.

But it was not only in instructions to intending Christians that Christian antiquity sought to plumb the depths of the "Our Father"; these instructions were always very animated discussions, straight from God, as it were, and about God. But in the 4th century there occurred the first verse settings of the "Our Father." The oldest document is actually not confined to the Lord's Prayer, which only occupies a small section of the "Gospel Harmonies" of a Spanish priest, Juvencus (written c.330). The author of an old Christian "Our Father" hymn is supposed to be Ambrose, Bishop of Milan (333-97). Straight-forward simplicity of thought is what characterizes these four unrhymed quatrains. Oldest of the great Latin Church Fathers, he wrote extensively on the Lord's Prayer in his *St. Luke Commentary*.

In the African Church of the 4th-5th century, *St. Augustine* (354-430) was renowned for his zeal in preaching and the cure of souls. His profound works contain several elucidations of the "Our Father." As Bishop of Hippo, he had the duty of preparing the catechumens of his diocese for baptism, and this included introducing them to the Lord's Prayer. Four of these addresses to catechumens have come down to us. In addition there are a letter to the Lady Proba about the "Our Father," commentaries in the "Little Handbook" (a sort of catechism), a treatise on *St. John's Gospel*, an essay "On Faith and the Creed," together with numerous commentaries on single petitions, scattered throughout the entire works of this great teacher. The "Our Father" provided *St. Augustine* with a welcome opportunity for unfolding his mind and heart. God and the soul, the two poles of *St. Augustine's* thought, are the poles of the Lord's Prayer, too. A comparison of his sermons on the "Our Father" with other early material clearly reveals the fresh individual stamp of his personality on his writings. Here for the first time we find number symbols establishing correspond-

ences, and the relating of the petitions of the "Our Father" to other factors of salvation. This vein was to enrich all the commentaries of the Latin middle ages.

St. Augustine related the three opening petitions to divine matters, the four last to temporal matters. He set out the seven petitions of the Lord's Prayer as parallel to the Beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount, which he counted as seven. He added the seven Gifts of the Spirit, from *Isaias* 11:22, and came to the following result, which we have set out in tabular form:

Fear of the Lord(7)	Thy Name ... (1)	Blessed the poor in spirit(1)
Godliness(6)	Thy Kingdom. (2)	Blessed those who mourn(3)
Knowledge ... (5)	Thy will.....(3)	Blessed the patient(2)
Fortitude(4)	Our daily bread(4)	Blessed those who hunger(4)
Counsel(3)	Forgive us(5)	Blessed the merciful....(5)
Understanding (2)	Lead us not....(6)	Blessed the clean of heart(6)
Wisdom(1)	But deliver us..(7)	Blessed the peace-makers(7)

As we see, St. Augustine placed the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit in reverse order to the seven petitions of the prayer, and he puts the third beatitude before the second, which is the order of the old Latin Bible translation which the Vulgate also follows.

The pre-Augustine "Our Father" commentaries had no such systematic ordering, though the older Fathers related certain virtues, vices and sacraments to the individual petitions. Tertullian, for instance, related faith to the salutation, the Eucharist to the fourth petition, confession of sins to the fifth. Cyprian related baptism and faith to the salutation, baptism to the first petition, the Eucharist to the fourth, brotherly love to the fifth. Origen related mercy to the fifth petition. It is a general trait of western Christian tradition to connect baptism and the Eucharist with the Lord's Prayer, which throws light on the use of the "Our Father" in the administration of both these sacraments.

Only a little later than St. Augustine in North Africa, *Peter Chrysologus* (died c.450), metropolitan of Ravenna, preached

his powerful sermons on the creed and the Lord's Prayer. In the brilliant atmosphere of that capital city and important seaport, where courtly society from Byzance ruled the fashion, a quite special gift was needed to convince Christians of the true spiritual wealth of a man regenerated in baptism. The "golden speaker" was equal to it. He chose scenes and comparisons from courtly life and let real freedom and the true wealth and dignity of man shine through them. Adoption by God, the kingdom of God, forgiveness by God, food of angels, deliverance from evil and expectation of glory: all was given that festive brilliance that in picture form shines out from the Ravenna mosaics with their golden ground.

In the Eastern Church *Cassian*, a Bethlehemite monk, carried on the tradition of Gregory of Nyssa. He found in the "Our Father" an ideal introduction to prayer and life for anchorites and monks. His commentary on "thy kingdom come" puts forward evangelical readiness and eschatological expectation as the virtues of those "whose loins should be girt at all times."

Late Byzantine spirituality, which found its equivalent in devotional literature too, is clearly visible in the "Our Father" commentary of *Maximus the Confessor* (580-662). He constituted the high watermark of Greek thought as well as the last phase of it, and it was on the entire content of revelation together with the "Our Father" that his comprehensive work was based, a work at once dogmatic, mystical and philosophical. His introduction anticipated the idea that in the seven petitions of the Lord's Prayer the seven main mysteries of Christianity are to be found. The aim of the Lord's Prayer is described as theology, adoption in grace, equality with angels, participation in everlasting life, and the restoration of fallen nature.

In the Latin world *Caelius Sedulius* (d. after 550) closes the series of early Christian lyrical writers. Like Juvenius, his verse "Our Father" forms a part of a longer poem, the "Easter Hymn," joyfully depicting Christ the Victor distributing vic-

tors' wreaths ("thy kingdom come"), guiding his own to the heavenly pastures of his divine sacrament ("give us this day our daily bread"), with two paths, one leading to perdition and Satan's toils (6th and 7th petitions). And these verses show that the "Our Father" is not only a prayer of petition but also of praise and thanksgiving.

On the threshold of the middle ages we have the attractive figure of the Gallic poet, *Venantius Fortunatus* (536-610). His prose works are less well known than his hymns, particularly the "Vexilla Regis," but among them there is an "Our Father" commentary which stresses the value of the prayer for communal use. Venantius would have each single petition prayed, not for oneself in the first place, but for one's neighbor and for people in general. Mutual help and support, alms-giving and a sense of responsibility for one another, are, according to his views, the foundation stones of the Lord's Prayer. The idea of the Mystical Body of Christ underlies all he says.

b) *Middle Ages*

The "Our Father" commentaries of early Christian times are bound together by a strong bond of unity: the liturgical spirit. From the 5th century onwards this grew slacker, and the commentaries tended more and more to be non-liturgical devotions. The Lord's Prayer remained an important feature of public worship, and was honored and valued as the chief prayer of Christendom. Most churches still kept to the custom of "delivering" it at baptism, even adding explanatory words to the liturgical ceremony, and this soon hardened into a set formula. With remarkable frequency we come across instructions to learn the Lord's Prayer by heart. Heads of households are sometimes called upon to see to it that their children and servants know it by heart. This became a law under Charlemagne. The Emperor himself took part in the examination to make sure his ordinance was being carried out, as part of his general

control of school education. Educated men of Charlemagne's court produced a type of catechetical instruction, a question-and-answer treatment of the teaching of the Church Fathers on the Lord's Prayer.

Other prescriptions of the Bishops of the Frankish Church emphasized the high importance of the "Our Father," stressing how necessary it was for godparents, candidates for baptism, and of course the parish priest himself and the rest of the clergy, to know the prayer by heart. No one was to be baptized or confirmed who did not know this most important prayer by heart.

In Charlemagne's time the form of catechism was still in Latin, but the necessity of having at least the key points of preparation for baptism in the vernacular was gradually recognized, and these included the "Our Father" and a short elucidation of its meaning. This accounts for the so-called interlinear versions of the principal texts in the monasteries of the Frankish Kingdom. Under the Latin, word for word, the vernacular text was written in, in its local dialect form (i.e., Alemanic or Frankish). Thus we have the St. Gall Paternoster and the Freising Paternoster. Soon, to the mere words, explanations in the vernacular were added which were gathered together into "catechisms." As linguistic documents these early texts are of inestimable value. Their sonority and beauty reflect the simple but vital religious feeling of the converted tribes. The fact that the "Our Father" was always present as a model prayer, is a proof of the fundamental importance that was attached to it in the spreading of Christianity. The Weissenburg Catechism is well-known. And alongside this Alsatian work we have a contemporary "Our Father" in a similar dialect by the Monk *Otfrid* (798-870). It forms a part of his Gospel-Harmony in the Rhine-Frankish tongue, his "Krist," an early translation of the Gospel: a South German witness equalling the Old Saxon "Heliand." In both poems the reader catches a glimpse of the world of ideas out of which these epics sprang. Terms like the "powerful kingdom of the ruler, the most powerful of kings,"

and "the high kingdom of heaven" are attempts to make clear the spiritual nature of the Kingdom of Christ.

Then we have in the 9th century a theological commentary of no less value, contained in the "Four Books on the Gospel according to St. Matthew" of the Frankish Abbot of Corbie, *St. Paschasius Radbertus* (785-860). Here the "Our Father" commentary is more considerable, it constitutes a veritable new creation in the spirit of the times of the Fathers. This Benedictine author had constantly in mind the all-embracing presence of the Mystical Body and this it is that colours all his utterances on the "Our Father," which is once more seen as wholly the prayer of the community, in closest connection with the sacrifice of Christ.

Then we have an early middle-high-German *Paternoster hymn* from Carinthia (Austria), which breathes a totally new spirit. Its twenty twelve-line stanzas are full of ideas playing round the number seven like planets round the sun. Since St. Augustine, the relating of the "Our Father" petitions to the Beatitudes, the Seven Gifts of the Spirit, the Virtues and the Vices, was common, and here in addition we have the Seven Patriarchs of the Old Covenant and the Seven lights of the Apocalypse and the Seven Pillars of Wisdom. The poem demonstrates how strongly Augustine's ideas and elucidations had taken possession of the mediaeval mind. Since his day it was a more and more intrinsic part of the tradition of "Our Father" commentaries to keep to this scheme. Often it was barely referred to, but on many occasions, as in our present example, it gave rise to a rich outcrop of speculations and constructions which at times lapsed into mere playing with words. But we cannot lightly brush aside as irrelevant an attitude of mind that was supported by the authority of Augustine, Thomas, Albert the Great and Bonaventura, for instance. There is evident behind it all a very earnest effort to bring the Lord's Prayer into concordance with the Sermon on the Mount. And it shows us how much the mediaeval Christian was aware that it is the

spirit in him that prays and makes invocation with inexpressible groanings—the spirit of godliness and fear of the Lord.

St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) established the order of the petitions on the four cardinal virtues. However, this framework is not protrusive on account of his passionately religious attitude of mind, and the holy Abbot's most urgent concern, the one that dominates all his written works, was the coincidence of the human will with the divine will.

The "Our Father" of *St. Francis of Assisi* (1181/2-1226) has something of the aura of the saint himself. It is a paraphrase with an inner force similar to that of the prayer: we are shown the Father as revealed by Christ—a power-house out of which the prayer of the seraphic saint grows organically like a hymn.

The Franciscan spirit is evident again in the commentaries of *St. Bonaventura* (1221-74). Three studies of the Lord's Prayer from his pen have come down to us, here and there showing signs of an attempt to systematize, intertwining learned scholastic ideas in the text. Alone in the "Breviloquium" the saint gave his temperament free play as "doctor seraphicus," and his address on the "Our Father" is at times reminiscent of the sung poems of the minstrels: a love-song between God and the soul.

It is the commentaries of the two great scholastics, Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas, that are most densely packed with thought and most clearly ordered. In the relevant parts of his *St. Matthew* and *St. Luke* commentaries, *Albert the Great* (1193 to 1280) draws freely on his abundant intellectual resources and what he says surpasses by far anything that the Church Fathers had found to include in their instructions on the prayer. Philosophy, science, considerations on government, all well ordered within a logical sequence of ideas, serve to illumine the truths of the "Our Father." Albert gives us for the first time a precise elucidation of the relation of the seven petitions to the seven sacraments.—*St. Thomas Aquinas* (1226-74) expounded the Lord's Prayer on various occasions. In his "Ca-

tena aurea" he gathered together the traditional writings of the Fathers, including those on the "Our Father," which he treated in his Paris lectures on St. Matthew's Gospel. The most fervent of his own elucidations is one among his lesser writings that has always borne the title of "deeply devout exposition of the Lord's Prayer." Finally, Thomas briefly jotted down on one side of a page his version of the "Our Father," under the heading: "In the Lord's Prayer is contained all that is to be desired and all that is to be eschewed."

The commentary of the Cistercian Bishop of Eichstatt, *Philip of Rathsamhausen* (1306-22), already shows traces of declining scholasticism. His remarks contain much that is beautiful in detail, but the mania for systematizing had reached such a pitch that though modern man may profitably work out the argument, there is no appeal to his religious sense.

But *John Tauler* (1300-1361) is a different matter. His sermon on the verse: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his justice" is a sort of "Our Father" commentary. It follows the wording of the prayer and reflects the whole endeavor of this great mystic to have man reshaped by God from his very foundations.

In the late middle ages there was no lack of commentaries on the "Our Father," but they do not offer anything new. They abide by the sayings of the Church Fathers or of the great theologians of the Schools in the high middle ages. Very often they are simplified in form, adapted for the use of the common people or for a group of Religious, or for a prince.

But it is not only the commentaries that are important; the manner of using the prayer is significant too, from a historical point of view. In the early Church it was a strictly liturgical prayer; by the middle ages it was in general use. In early Christian times the "Didache" ordained a three-fold praying of the "Our Father" and in the 13th century an English Bishop laid it down "that every Christian, man and woman, pray the 'Our Father' seven times each day, for according to the Prophet the

Lord should be praised seven times a day." This directive was certainly not only current in the diocese of the Bishop of Coventry. In fact it demonstrates how the "Our Father" had become a sort of substitute in lay circles for the breviary prayers of priests and monks. And in fact we find in the rules of Religious Orders that lay brothers were supposed to say the "Our Father" a certain number of times as their Office. The custom was already established at Cluny. The number of Paternosters increased in the late middle ages and so did the occasions for which they were prescribed. And within the liturgy of the Mass, the prayers of the faithful took the form of frequent repetitions of "Our Father" while the priest at the altar read the prayers of the day in Latin. The congregation were only required to unite their intentions to those of the priest.

Even in those days, contemporaries saw this development as an unfortunate one as far as the "Our Father" was concerned, and voices were constantly raised, warning against a purely numerical piling up of "Our Fathers," for fear the deep meaning of the prayer be all too easily lost through merely habitual repetitive praying. The Florentine preacher of penance, Savonarola (1452-98), pleaded for more devout praying of this sublime prayer, which to his mind included the sum of all possible forms of prayer: reading, meditation, practice and contemplation. But at the same time he uttered words of warning: "Not so many prayers, not so many 'Our Fathers'! —One single devout 'Our Father' weighs more than a thousand merely prayed with the lips."

Among all the utterances of the later middle ages, those of *Nicholas of Cues* (1401-64) stand out on account of their deep piety and high flights of the spirit. This Bishop of Brixen used the two sections of the Lord's Prayer to expound his views on God and the world, and declared that the "Our Father" contained all man wants to know and all that it is possible for him to understand here on earth.

His traveling-companion, *Dionysius Carthusianus* (d.1471),

also wrote an "Our Father" commentary, differing from that of his master as the minds of the two men differed, one more original and creative, the other more the collector and commentator. Once more we observe how the wide span of the Lord's Prayer has room in it for all sorts of methods of praying. —In the Carthusian text there are unmistakable traces of the movement towards religious renewal which came from the brethren of the Netherlands. The movement found literary expression in the "Imitation of Christ," a book intimately related to the "Our Father" declaring "there is no better, no more holy prayer"; and the prayers and meditations of this work are all simply paraphrases and amplifications of what is said more briefly in the Lord's Prayer.

c) The Time of the Reformation and Catholic Reform

In the Reformation period, when conflict broke out over the truths of the faith, religious doctrine became an important weapon in the fight for souls. The discovery of printing shifted the center of gravity from the pulpit to the printed word. In the same period humanism gave access to ancient sources, and biblical texts as well as the writings of the Church Fathers won new recognition.

Among the leading humanists within the Church we can mention John Cochläus (d. 1552) and John Wild (d. 1554), the first of whom concentrated on religious instruction while the second won renown as a preacher, both showing great devotion to the Lord's Prayer. Quiet distinction and courtesy mark the "illustrative and devout unfolding of the Lord's Prayer" by *Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam* (1466-1536). Like the rest of the works of this great humanist, it demonstrates his way of approaching religious questions by way of cultural ones, it reflects the universal spirit of its author and is a witness to the acceptance of life that characterized the Renaissance within

the religious sphere. For Erasmus, the "Our Father" has great cultural value.

In the German tongue, the new note struck in religious matters came from *Martin Luther* (1483-1456). All his life he loved the Lord's Prayer and set it above the Psalter "which I do indeed love dearly." As a fruit of this love the reformer bestowed on his contemporaries a series of expositions, directives and sermons on the theme, and composed a new "Our Father" hymn. In his catechism he sought above all to impress the "Our Father" on a child's malleable soul by a method of questions and answers, an attempt which had its forerunners in the Catholic catechisms of Coelde, Wicelius, Dietenberger, Holding, Landskron and others.

A Catholic model catechism, the *Roman Catechism*, was drawn up by the Fathers of the Council of Trent. To its profound and beautiful elucidation of the "Our Father" was added a word of warning to priests to see to it that the venerable prayer be frequently and worthily prayed. This Latin catechism is the basic one for all later catechisms, the German one of Peter Canisius, the Italian one of Robert Bellarmine, the French ones of Bossuet and others. The so-called Genevan Catechism of Calvin is based on Luther's.—In all catechisms an explanation of the Lord's Prayer occupies an important place.

It is in all cases simple in form, and addressed in clear, unambiguous language to young people and people who think simply.—Subtle penetration in a language near to poetry and psychologically differentiated approach, are the characteristics of the "Our Father" commentaries of *St. Teresa of Avila* and *Louis de Bourdaloue*. Teresa (1515-82) wished to give her daughters an introduction to inward prayer and scattered commentaries on the Lord's Prayer throughout her book on "The Way of Perfection." Taking the text of the prayer as her starting-point, she set out to show the way from the prayer of recollection and quiet to the prayer of union. The three-toned chord of mysticism, already apparent in the mediaeval commentaries,

rings through here very clearly supported by the powerful surge of faith that accompanied Catholic reform.

Luther's "Our Father" hymn is not the only one of its kind. He gave general impetus to the composition of Church hymns and thereby revived the pre-Reformation Paternoster hymns. In the last phase of the middle ages, the "Our Father" was sung as "Leis," that is, a form of hymn where the clergy or choir sang the verses—often in Latin—and the congregation the responses as a sort of refrain. "The simple and ignorant called: Kyrie Eleison!"

At this time, the high art of music turned its attention to the "Our Father." Palestrina composed a five-part motet on the Lord's Prayer, and John Sebastian Bach's soaring tones bore the "Our Father" to the throne of the All-Highest in this wise.

Similarly, pictorial representations of the Lord's Prayer continued to appear, though without being more successful than earlier ones in rendering the theological dimension.

The finest hymns of the baroque period were composed by Frederick of Spee (d. 1635) and *Angelus Silesius* (d. 1677), and both rendered the "Our Father" in verse. Spee made up a hymn which he included in his collection "Trutznachtigall"; Silesius had a wonderful way with words and ideas and made some daringly successful ventures. His epigrams in the "Cherubic Wanderer" are masterly free variations on the salutations and petitions of the "Our Father."

d) From the French Revolution to the Present Day

The 18th Century was comparatively poor in religious genius. The "Age of Enlightenment" proclaimed the rule of Reason and spread the ideal of a "natural" religion, and this constituted a setback for Christianity, including its literary and artistic forms. The commentaries on our theme diminished in number and the few that occurred lacked real substance. But for purposes of instruction they lost none of their importance,

for even the Enlightenment included religious directives in their educational programs. The old catechisms were considered obsolete, so new ones were drawn up, more adapted to the spirit of the times, and frequently degraded to the status of mere "playgrounds for enlightened ideas." The "Our Father" commentaries are often no more than a few dry sentences, as for example in the Constance Catechism of 1814 done under the influence of Wessenberg. The creed is replaced by an acknowledgement of the existence of God. The kingdom of heaven is accounted for in terms of the moral virtues and piety. In the commentary on the fourth petition there is no reference to spiritual food or the Eucharist.

All this, so remote from true religious life in God, soon provoked a counter-movement. It began on the Protestant side and culminated in Pietism. In this new awakening of religious life, the "Our Father" returned to occupy a more central position. A capacity for belief reawakened and the profundities of the divine prayer were rediscovered. The "Biblical Considerations" of Johann Georg Hamann (d.1788) culminate in a remarkable paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer. Matthias Claudius (1740-1815) dedicated a simple, heartfelt commentary to the "best prayer once for all"; Johann Albrecht Bengel (1687-1752) was one of the most original minds of South German Pietism; in his "Gnomon," that is, "sign-posts to the understanding of the New Testament," he gave quite short but illuminating comments, of a philological nature, on individual verses of the Bible, including the "Our Father." He saw it as "an incomparable form and the sum of all prayers." He compared it to the first Epistle of St. Peter, which he found to be wholly in accord with it.

On the Catholic side, one of the promoters of religious revival was *Johann Michael Sailer* (1751-1832). His lectures on pastoral theology include an "Essay in popular preaching on the 'Our Father.'" Here he makes it impressively clear that it is not enough to learn the prayer, the outcome must be "the

work of works, the transformation of the inner man." A further theme of his is joy: the author of joy is the heavenly Father, to whom we address our praise and petitions in the "Our Father." To welcome temporal and earthly goods, health, and all things beautiful is a joyous experience, inducing gratitude towards the giver of all good things, and provoking thoughts on the symbolic nature of all earthly things, which are destined to find their meaning and goal in eternity; their transiency may distress us, but that, too, points the way to the eternal.

German theology at this time developed with a vitality that was of importance for all Europe. The Catholic revival went hand in hand with a reform of the catechism which helped to give the Lord's Prayer a secure place in the life of faith and prayer. Sailer's endeavors were carried on by his favorite pupil, Christoph von Schmid, a writer of religious literature for children. He brought out a fresh "Little Canisius," and a catechism for teachers and priests, as well as a historical catechism. —In 1842, *Johann Baptist v. Hirscher* (1788-1865) published his "Catechism of the Christian Catholic Religion" with an "Our Father" commentary that reflected his favorite idea: Without disturbing the order of the petitions, he made "thy kingdom come" its center-point; indeed he endeavored to build it all upon the foundation of this petition. He saw in all six petitions (the one for bread is excepted) an indication of the nature of God's kingdom, which has first to be sought and consequently has first to be prayed for.

In the 18th and 19th centuries there are poets, too, who bore witness to their love and reverence for the prayer. Klopstock composed a solemn ode on the petitions; Grillparzer, with his uncertain attitude to religion, expounded in a Hymn to the "Our Father" that agonizing state of mind, alternating proximity to and distance from God, that was his lot, showing he had indeed drawn a moment's authentic experience from the abundant resources of the prayer, though no absolute criterion. The Romantic writer Clemens Brentano goes back to "an old

Gothic manuscript," with an "Our Father" commentary from the group of fourteenth-century German mystics, and he scatters his tales ("Chronicles of a Wandering Scholar") with phrases and ideas from the prayer; he also puts down his personal feelings about it in a spiritual poem: "he who prays is the Lord's fellow" he says, and where praying is done, "he is in the midst of the gathering." In an evening poem of Brentano's, about falling night and the shadow of death, he begs the reader, in the last verse, to pray the "Our Father" for him, the poet, too.

Among Catholic popular writers of the second half of the 19th century, *Alban Stolz* (1818-83) is outstanding. He had a great love for the "Our Father" and took it as the theme of his "Calendars." Everything in his "Calendar Our Father" is related to God and Christ, while the entire matter is drawn from the visible world of the common people.

It is remarkable what an important part the chief prayer of Christianity plays in religious works of the 20th century. Ernst Lohmeyer has pointed out that the "Our Father" always seems to need fresh interpretation at the turning-points of history. According to the requirements of our times, it is the social content of the prayer that focuses the attention of the devout and the commentators.

At the turn of the century, the French poet *Charles Péguy* (1873-1914) expressed the idea of general redemption in his poetic meditations. "People must be saved together," he declared in his "Jeanne d'Arc," a hope that threads its way, visibly and invisibly, through the lines of his "Our Father." His so-called socialism was to be a holy revolution of the human spirit, in a deeply religious sense, with a "general return" to the Father's house. "What would he say to us if we came to him alone, without the others?" In his "Our Father," using daring images of ships and squadrons, he gives poetic expression to the conquest of the profundities of divine love. And it is significant that he includes the Prodigal Son in his "Our Father" as proof of divine love in contrast to just judgment.—A "little

story" revealing that mystery of judgment that is called love.

No less radical was the "Berlin Our Father" of *Carl Sonnenschein*, in 1928. It had none of that highly dramatic personal experience of the quest for salvation, a salvation to include everyone, but was inspired by deep social compassion, touching the temporal needs of people too. This "Our Father" is a *cri du coeur*, an "Our Father" prayed from the depth of all human misery. The author turns his prayer into an accusation of all responsible for such distress.

Yet another "Our Father" is a confession of faith by a man overwhelmed by the powers of chaos, from *Alfred Delp*, a priest of the Society of Jesus, "written between condemnation and execution in the prison of Tegel."—"Blessed are those who suffer persecution in the cause of right; the kingdom of heaven is theirs." Here the eighth Beatitude found its true correspondence to the seven petitions of the "Our Father." It is the commentary of one who has come to the end, standing on the threshold of eternity, and who, in the clear light of eternity, recalls for himself and his unspecified brothers, the nature of God and man as propounded in the "Our Father." It offers a doctrine of man in the language of our times: a review of that much-debated problem of man and what he is. Again and again the attempt has been made to give a true picture of man. For Delp, the answer is to be found in the depths of the Lord's Prayer and in belief in God, the Father. Man is only truly man where he hallows God's name. The world is within God's order, and man is within God's grace where God's kingdom starts. The question of the community is raised and answered here, too, for in the midst of a socialism antagonistic to God, man is put in solitary confinement.—The petition "thy kingdom come" demands, says Delp, that we be prepared for revolution, that is, ready for drastic social change, if an order is to reign that will enable people to live humanly worthy and humanly appropriate lives, and thus be open to God and ready for God. Like Nicholas of Cues earlier, Delp shows how things are

all dovetailed, assent to God's will being dependent on human freedom, and personal guilt a part of the poor performance of our world. We have here a truly impressive and powerful word of warning.

Placing our commentaries in chronological order, we find we are providing an outline of Christian prayer. Within the scope of this book, we cannot do more than hope it will be an inducement to pass on to that true way of prayer that all the commentators have in mind, and which Christ intends when he declares, in St. John's Gospel, that prayer in the spirit and in truth is a sign that salvation is near at hand.

4. THE "OUR FATHER" AS THE SUBLIME PRAYER OF THE NEW COVENANT

"Philological and historical research and its findings are irrelevant to the nature of the 'Our Father.' There are foreshadowings of the 'Our Father' in the world of antiquity. They explain the 'Our Father' not otherwise, not more, but also not less, than break of dawn explains the subsequent rising of the sun" (B. Martin).

The tremendous novelty of the prayer, the great force, wonder-working and sin-forgiving, of these words of Christ's have always filled men with amazement and awe, and continue to do so, inspiring them to render these "divinizing words" (as an old collect from the West Gothic liturgy calls them) in successive series of paraphrases, pictures and interpretations. Though indeed "the essence of the 'Our Father' is not in what can be said but in the inexpressible that dwells in it" (B. Martin), it is still a divine command to raise our hearts to God in the spirit of this "incomparable prayer" (Bengel), to harken to the spirit of God speaking through men, and to pass on what has been heard. Every age has to find its own way to its depths and to open it up for general use. There are large quantities of paraphrases of the "Our Father," in the form of prayers, simple

declarations, ingenious commentaries, making its sublimity known, witnessing to its holiness, professing and strengthening belief, and pointing the way to the heavenly abodes. It is like a mighty chorus of voices harmonizing in praise of the unique nature, the dignity, and the divine origin of the "Our Father." Here are a few selected passages:

As God's spirit and God's word and God's thought, our Lord Jesus Christ provided the disciples of the New Covenant with a new way of praying. Here too he had to put new wine into new skins, and sew new cloth for the new garment. . . . John, too, taught his disciples to pray, but all his work was only intended to prepare the way for Christ until he was full-grown—according to the saying of this same John, that he must wane but the other must wax; then the completed work of the forerunner and servant, with the Spirit itself, was transferred to the Lord. . . . That is why John's words are unknown to us, for what was of the earth gave way to what was of heaven. He who is of the earth speaks of earthly things, and he who is from heaven says what he has seen. Thus everything that comes from Christ the Lord is of heaven, including his directions for prayer. Let us therefore consider his heavenly wisdom . . . ! For it covers not only what belongs to every prayer essentially, that is, glorifying God and making petitions, but it covers the whole revelation of God, the whole content of morality. Thus, in the Lord's Prayer there is contained in effect a brief summary of the whole gospel. . . . In these few short words, how many sayings of the prophets, the evangelists, the apostles, are touched upon, and discourses of our Lord, too, parables, examples and directives, and how many duties of service are at the same time given their due! God is honoured in the word *Father*, in *name* there is a testimony of faith, in *will* obedience is proposed, in *Kingdom* the prayer for life, an admission of guilt in the petition for prevention; in the plea for protection apprehension of *temptations*.

TERTULLIAN

Among other saving admonitions and divine commands for the salvation of his people, Christ bestowed on us the words which we are to use for our prayer. He himself admonished us and taught us

what we should pray for. He who gave us life taught us to pray, with the same loving-kindness with which he graciously vouchsafed to give us all other things, so that we should the more easily gain a hearing when we speak to the Father, using the prayer-petitions that the Son taught us. From the very beginning he proclaimed that the hour would come when true worshippers would worship the Father in spirit and in truth (John 4:23). He kept his promise; for we who received the spirit and the truth through his hallowing, can now worship in truth and in spirit, according to his method. And what prayer more deserves to be called a spiritual prayer than the prayer that Christ bestowed on us, who also sent us the Holy Spirit? What prayer is a true supplication to the Father if not this one, which fell from the lips of his Son, who is the truth? To pray otherwise than he taught would therefore not only be ignorance but also a sin.

CYPRIAN OF CARTHAGE

Thou seest how short this prayer is. It is full of all excellences.

AMBROSE

Full of blessing is the prayer the wording of which was provided by the Teacher of life and the heavenly Master. And we are blessed when we adhere to the words of the Lord's Prayer not only formally with our lips but by true conversion to virtue. The Lord set the wording of the prayer for his disciples, in order to strengthen them in their hope of salvation.

CHROMATIUS OF AQUILEIA

The Lord's Prayer is the prototype of our desires. If we do not deviate from the words and the intention of this prayer in making our petitions, all we ask for will be given us.

Turn up all the holy forms in which prayer has found expression, and you will not, I believe, find anything that is not contained and included in the Lord's Prayer. You are free to use what words you will in the praying of the one prayer, but you are not free to pray another prayer.

AUGUSTINE

This prayer contains the fullness of perfection.

JOHN CASSIAN

The content of your prayer, the matter for your petitions, the criterion for your supplication he has graciously given you in quite short words, he whom you shall invoke. And thus you shall acquire the spirit of petition and obtain an understanding of supplication and grasp the measure of aspiration and in this briefest of forms of instruction receive the best schooling of all.

PETER CHRYSOLOGUS

Before the Paternoster, when the priest says: Oremus, the whole Church is intended. And the Church prays with the priest: not with lips but with hearts. The lips remain closed, but the mind lies open. Quiet reigns, the heart calls: God the merciful hears it with his ears.

FLORUS OF LYON

Our Lord and God Jesus Christ gave us in the prayer he fashioned a form of prayer in which, through the sevenfold petitions, all that we may ask for is contained.

BONAVENTURA

We must understand that this prayer surpasses other prayers for four reasons: on account of the authority of the Teacher, the brevity of the text, the sufficient number of petitions and on account of the fruitfulness of the mysteries. On account of the *authority of the Teacher* because it is the prayer of the Redeemer himself who taught the apostles to pray, and it came from the Lord's own lips. That is why it is rightly called the Lord's Prayer. This prayer which was taught by the Lord and will be heard by him, is a ring to be worked round most earnestly.—It surpasses other prayers in *the brevity of the text*, for it can easily be learnt and repeated and soon remains imprinted on the memory. When a man fails to do this it is inexcusable. Moreover the Lord drew up this short prayer to prove he was the one who hears shortly what our urgent trouble and our immediate need would have of him. He says in fact: when you pray, do not use a lot of words.—And the Lord's Prayer surpasses other prayers through the *sufficient number of the petitions*, for it contains all that is needed for temporal and eternal life.—It surpasses them finally by *the fruitfulness of the mysteries* it contains, for it embraces all sacraments.

PHILIP OF RATHSAMHAUSEN

It is not important that we pray a large number of "Our Father's." We should make our prayer a perpetual act of faith. We know through the light of grace that God can give us what we desire. We know there is eternal Wisdom which understands how to give and knows what is good for us. We know that he is a kind and compassionate Father who will give us more than we could ask for and more than we need.

CATHARINE OF SIENA

Our reason which is disposed towards truth finds in the "Our Father" an illumination such that it knows in steady faith what truth is; that is, what is the beginning and origin of all things, how they issue from God, by what means they flow back, and what their goal is. The origin, the divine nature, is given in the words: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come. The issue in the words: Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them who trespass against us; lead us not into temptation. The goal in the words: But deliver us from evil. Amen.

Nature, grace and glory and all that man desires to know, in so far as is possible on this earth, in the order in which the Masters of Theology can best grasp it, is wholly to be found in this most holy prayer. There is nothing superfluous in it and nothing too little, nothing too heavy and nothing too light, nothing too long and nothing too short, nothing without grounds and without the right order in which first must be first and last, last.

NICHOLAS OF CUES

What sublime perfection lies in this evangelical prayer, how well one sees in it the divine wisdom of him who composed it, and how grateful we must be for it. Each one of you, my daughters, can in praying adapt it to the particular needs of her soul. I am struck with admiration at how it contains in so few words everything that belongs to perfection and contemplation, so that apparently one need only study it to need no other books at all.

TERESA OF AVILA

Among the prayers which are ordered for us and which we may never neglect, is the "Our Father." We must pray it every day as the Savior himself gives us to understand when he would have us pray: "Give us this day our daily bread." This shows us that we

should ask daily, that is to say we are to offer our prayer every day; and when you tell me you have not prayed it today, I retort that you are no Christian and have left a duty undone.

FRANCIS OF SALES

Among vocal prayers the "Our Father" is the most worthy, the most divine, the most concisely worded and the most comprehensive in regard to the things that are expressed in it; the one that most elevates the mind and the most powerful in obtaining from God what we desire.

FRANCOIS BOURGOING

The sayings of Christ are a well that never goes dry. When one draws from it, it fills up again; and the new meaning is always even greater and more glorious than the former one. So it is with all he uttered, his sayings and his parables; and so it is with the "Our Father." The longer one prays it, the more evident it is how little one understands it, and how it deserves to be understood and thought over, with unheard-of treasures for the finding.

MATTHIAS CLAUDIUS

The Lord's Prayer is heavenly. It issues from man's deepest spirit, from that state of hovering between his own strength, which wants to be exerted, and a higher power, which can be drawn into participation by an exalted feeling. What heights man attains to, what divine heights, when he prays: forgive us as we forgive our trespassers; independent and free, he stands face to face with Deity and with his own hand opens the way to heaven or hell. And how splendid it is that this most noble sentiment engenders nothing but the purest token of humility: lead us not into temptation! Indeed, he who prays this prayer aright, with devout feeling and, as far as human impotence allows it, accepting its challenge, has already been heard—it cannot be otherwise. The Amen springs directly from the prayer. Thus it is in the highest sense a work of art.

FRIEDRICH HEBBEL

As a general rule, forms of prayer should not be written in strong and impassioned language; but should be calm, composed and short. . . . There are few of us but would feel it a privilege to use the very petitions (in the Lord's Prayer) which Christ spoke. His apostles used it; all the saints ever since have used it.—

In past time good men thought this form of prayer so sacred, that it seemed impossible to them to say it too often . . . nor *can* we use it too often . . . we cannot, so that we keep our thoughts fixed on its petitions, and use our minds as well as our lips when we repeat it.

JOHN HENRY CARDINAL NEWMAN

Even in its structure the "Our Father" is an insurpassable model for Christian prayer. All possible objects of prayer are set out here in such well-ordered sequence that we can also use as our own the God-willed disposition of prayer in it, and should do so. Full of wisdom is the placing of the individual petitions in relation to one another, leading us on to estimate and appreciate what is of heaven and what of earth, what is eternal and what temporal, each according to its true worth; and as a result, to pursue our search for them and make our supplication for them, all in appropriate order.

Then there is the further advantage that a model of prayer so perfect in respect of content and form, a set of petitions that actually came from the heart and lips of Jesus, must be specially well-pleasing to God, and therefore uncommonly efficacious and rich in grace and blessing. And what we pray for in Jesus' name we shall obtain far more easily and surely if we pray with the prayer he commended to us, and use the very words our Advocate used.

The words of the prayer which Jesus first uttered on the Mount, for the benefit of his disciples, have since been repeated in all languages by all the Christian peoples of the earth, and shall be repeated by all Christian peoples throughout all times until the end of the world. The "Our Father" has become the prayer of Christendom, the *world prayer*. For all believing Christian souls it is and remains forever an inexhaustible source of consolation and blessing, and at the same time a favorite object for consideration and reflection. In order to say this most venerable, powerful, precious prayer with due recollection, devotion and dedication, a deeper *understanding* and therefore more frequent *contemplation* of its inexhaustibly rich content are requisite, or postulated.

NICHOLAS GIHR

We have a prayer that is the crown of all prayers, the theme, the ground, the leitmotiv of all Christian prayer. It is like a rainbow with seven colors, spanning the gap from earth to heaven. It is like an instrument with seven strings that threads wonderful

melodies into the workaday life and the Sunday festivals of mankind.

P. W. VON KEPPLER

There are combinations of words which one does not forget; who forgets the 'Our Father'?

HUGO VON HOFMANNSTHAL

The words are plain, the phrases short, and what it means is clearly and greatly declared. Jesus' prayer is so simple that we do not notice at all how deep it is. Like pure air it is and the wide sky above, like sun and hill and plain; we take it as a matter of course, because it is so natural, so true, so wholly divine.

The "Our Father" is utterly full of what filled the soul of our Lord; full of his heavenly Father. Indeed it was for him that he came; his glory was his whole endeavor. To found his Father's kingdom, make it secure and fruitful, spread it throughout the whole world, was the whole purpose of his life. Jesus' Father—the great, rich content of this divine prayer. . . .

It is a prayer that gives one a sense of breadth and freedom; in which the final goal of all creation appears to the spiritual eye, the heavenly Father; in which man strips himself of all that is small, throws away all self-seeking, and fills his heart with the greatest, most exalted, most powerful Father in heaven; and in which he prays for the great matters that, rightly considered, are the matters of God the Father himself.

ROMANO GUARDINI

I was still very small when I heard my mother pray the "Our Father." I must have felt at once that it was something different from everything else around us. Indeed, when mother repeated it and taught it to me, it altered the things that lay around us. Things ceased to be there by chance and a sense of holiness was spread about us like a veil of light.—I had forgotten the "Our Father" long ago. But I know that man may most safely measure his maturity by reference to the Lord's Prayer. I have personal experience of this. It is not a thing one can talk or write about. One simply knows it.—And I know, since then, too, that this prayer is the center point of all that is Christian, and will remain so; center-point of that Christianity that pluckily lives its daily life and seldom emerges beyond it.

HERMANN CLAUDIUS

The Lord's Prayer is the wonderful and yet simple mean between the heights the saints scale in prayer, and the depths which have always been the portion of man and always will be till the end. Or rather it is both these two; it contains both. No one can ever climb so high that he can say, the "Our Father" is the prayer for simple Christian souls, and I have outgrown it. And no one can ever be such a beginner that he could not make this prayer his own. Neither may man ever put aside the humble petitions of the second half, for bread, forgiveness and deliverance from evil, either on his own account or for others. And even the most sinful sinner who yearns for forgiveness, and the most sorely-tried soul for whom bread is an urgent matter, must raise their minds to the great things of God. If the stress falls variously, for saint and for sinner, for him whose faith is great and him whose faith is small, both parts of the prayer must be prayed—if a man's prayer is to be genuine. Let us simply leave the verdict to God and put your whole trust in the prayer.

EUGEN WALTER

The "Our Father" is a comprehensive prayer.—"If you study the wording of all the prayers, I think you will not find anything that is not contained in the 'Our Father'" (Augustine).—The "Our Father" is a perfect, all-embracing, all-ordering and all-uniting prayer. There is no desire of the troubled human heart that does not find expression here, here all petitions proper to man are voiced. The "Our Father" is a catechism of all the truths we have to believe, and all the duties we have to fulfill.—The "Our Father" will also have its effect on our own efforts, for to apply ourselves to the petitions one by one is immediately to set our hearts in order. The "Our Father" is the most venerable of all prayers, the Church received it from the lips of Christ, her Lord.—To pray an "Our Father" is a wager. The "Our Father" has even been called the "great torturer" of Christendom.

HUGO LANG

We have to remember not only that Jesus Christ gave his disciples the "Our Father" as a prayer, but also that the "Our Father" is the only prayer he gave them.

BERNARD MARTIN

When we take trouble with the "Our Father," we learn from Christ the true way of praying and giving form to our prayer. Prayer being the essence of the spiritual life, in the "Our Father" Christ teaches us to realize and live this inner life as the source of supernatural exaltation, holiness and perfect joy. To live the life of the spirit means to live the "Our Father" more soundly than by merely repeating the words. When words are well-understood and (still more important) grasped and felt in a lively manner, repetition can help to preserve in us the spirit contained in the words, and does not infringe Christ's command not to use a lot of words in praying. So long as repetition of the "prayer formula" maintains us in a "condition of prayer" worth more than the saying of the words, it may serve to fulfill that other directive of our Lord's: Pray at all times!

LEO VEUTHEY

CHAPTER TWO

The "Our Father" in Jesus' Life and Prayer



THE "OUR FATHER" is so deeply and intimately connected with the life and labors of our Lord that it loses its meaning and content if it is not seen in its proper context. In St. Luke's Gospel it comes at a definite stage of Our Lord's divinely human life: "Once, he had found a place to pray, and when his prayer was over one of his disciples said to him, Lord, teach us how to pray, as John did for his disciples. And he told them: When you pray, you are to say, Father . . ." Fresh from his own loving intercourse with the Father, he taught them the "Our Father." Like a living spring it issued from the praying heart of our Lord. All his life was a surrender in prayer to the will of the Father, and in prayer he completed the immolation of his life to the Father's glory. In our Lord's life, life and prayer belong inseparably together and no one who would follow Christ dare loosen this close interconnection of life and prayer in his own life. To do so is to be worse than the Pharisee praying in self-justification, worse than the heathen with their patter.

Father

In the life and prayer of our Lord, at the beginning and at the end, is the Father. This fact had such compelling force for the

disciples that the native word, the familiar one of Jesus' mother tongue, was never forgotten again: Abba, dear Father. It was constantly in use: the Father sent him, the Father lived in him, the Father loved him. He led him on to the decisive hour, he tore him from the underworld and raised him to his right hand. His house, his word, his glory, his command were the whole content and purport of Jesus' life. In St. Luke's report, his first recorded words are of the place which belongs to his Father, where he "must needs be." And his last words are: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." These words embrace all his living and praying. He is the Son whose whole life is accounted for by the Father's love. He knows him, he alone, in the Holy Spirit.

What profounder thing could he disclose to us than this one word: Father? What should we pray, other than this prayer of Jesus? The trinitarian colloquy of eternal love, begun before all ages at the heart of the Godhead, decided the way man may speak to his God, because God became Man. Nor is it only a manner of speaking, it is reality, for—through grace, the gift of his love, we are no longer slaves but sons. "To prove that you are sons, God has sent out the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying out in us, Abba, Father."

Who art in heaven

Our Father! How often the Lord says these words. My Father and your Father. Your heavenly Father. From heaven, from above, from the Father the Son is come. "Suddenly heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit came down upon him in bodily form, like a dove, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased" (Luke 3:21, 22). To him was given "all authority in heaven and on earth." Heaven, that is God's mysterious dwelling; heaven is where the Father is. Jesus "was taken up to heaven, and is seated now at the right hand of God." As Son of Man he

is there until we see him "coming with the clouds of heaven." Heaven for our Lord is more than a symbol. It means home, where he came from and where he will go. He came from the Father and returned to him, to prepare a dwelling for us for "We find our true home in heaven."

Hallowed be thy name

In his farewell prayer, which St. John gives us, our Lord says: "I have made thy name known." He proclaimed God's holy name, his inmost being, full of his truth, his love, his holiness and justice, his glory, as that hour revealed, shortly before the Last Passover, when the glory of God was made known to the heathen: "The time has now come for the Son of Man to achieve his glory. Believe me when I tell you this; a grain of wheat must fall into the ground and die, or else it remains nothing more than a grain of wheat; but if it dies, then it yields rich fruit.—And now my soul is distressed. What am I to say? I will say, Father, save me from undergoing this hour of trial; and yet, I have only reached this hour of trial that I might undergo it. Father, make thy name known. And at this, a voice came from heaven, I have made it known, and will yet make it known." Here is laid bare the secret of Christ's life. Not deliverance from death, not power and life, but the glory of the Father's name. So that the glory be his; so that God may be all in all. Christ has revealed to us the name of God "as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee," that is, as God's holy unity. That is why, in the upper room of the Last Supper, he prayed: "Holy Father, keep them true to thy name, thy gift to me, that they may be one, as we are one." And henceforth, whenever one baptized in God's name calls upon his name, he is drawn into this process of loving between Father and Son. And thus he bridges the gulf between himself and his brothers and finds the way out of solitude and anxiety into union and love.

In the life and prayer of Jesus God's name is a shining beacon.

In a name a Being is revealed, and God's Being is holy, is truth and love. Hallowed be thy name:—when we pray this, we beg him to take us into the communion of his love; to unite us together, as he is one with the Son; so that we shall then understand the mystery of the grain of corn and learn to say: "Father, make thy name known."

Thy kingdom come

It would mean tearing Jesus' thought and prayer to pieces to try to separate what belongs together. The Father and his holy name, God's kingdom and his will—all that is inseparable. When Jesus says, Father, he means his holy Being and his almighty power that embraces heaven and earth, where he is King and his will ought to be done and will be done. It is important not to forget that, for Jesus himself lived and prayed from the viewpoint of this unity. The Lord's Prayer is the same and not to be taken to pieces either. It may be examined in detail, but only to be immediately restored to its proper setting, at the heart of Christian prayer, a wonderful creation of interwoven divine and human elements, heaven and earth.

God's kingdom, that is what Jesus knew he was sent to proclaim. "He went journeying from one city to another, preaching and spreading the good news of God's kingdom." It began with him. "The kingdom of God is here, within you." That was his mission: to tell people that God's boundless kingdom is here. Now is the decisive hour, the hour of judgment. His preaching was full to the brim of this message. To make it known and make it evident, all was grist to the mill: seed, leaven, the hidden treasure and the pearl of great price, the fisherman's net and the vineyard, money-changing and the wedding feast. He gathered disciples round him, so that the good news might be carried on from generation to generation till it reached the far ends of the earth. He allowed himself neither rest nor leisure in the performance of his mission, for he knew: "To-

day and tomorrow I am to continue . . . ; on the third day I am to reach my consummation."

God's kingdom, the kingdom of heaven—that is what moved him on the evening he ate the passover lamb with his disciples. He bequeathed it to them in the form of an obligation: "No difference is to be made among you, between the greatest and the youngest of all, between him who commands and him who serves. Tell me, which is greater, the man who sits at table or the man who serves him? Surely the man who sits at table; yet I am here among you as your servant." Kingdom of God—service in obedient love, because God is love. It is always the same, whether we say: Father, or pray that his name be hallowed, his kingdom come. For Jesus it is all the same: it is being in him. Giving him the glory. Making his name known, leading all men and all things home to him, in the unity of his love, and in the power of his kingdom, in the almighty power of his love. Wanting nothing for oneself. Only to serve and be there for him. Doing as love does.

And so he would have us pray: thy kingdom come, so that we become more and more filled with the power of this message: the kingdom of God wants to break out in this world, and grow and spread till the great day of the Lord dawn and his kingdom be visible throughout creation. It is for this day that Jesus lived. Now he is hidden in the Father. But on that day he will be revealed as the Lord who was obedient unto death on the Cross, and who spent himself in the surrender of his life, a pledge of redemption for many. To pray as he did means to do as he did. To go into the vineyard, to be ready for service as true followers of the Lord, not to look back but to proceed, ploughing furrows, sowing seed, waiting, weeping, keeping watch through long nights, preparing food and doing a servant's work, at the same time laying aside all claims to superiority, becoming as small as a child, serving and loving, loving and serving. First and foremost seeking God's kingdom, hungering and thirsting for justice, till the Lord return and we may sit at

his table: "I promise you, he will gird himself, and make them sit down to meat, and minister to them."

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven

Praying in the night of the Mount of Olives, as we know from the Gospel records, Jesus used two phrases from the Lord's Prayer: Abba, Father—and: thy will be done,—revealing what he had at heart in that hour he had so ardently desired, and to endure which he had so resolutely turned his face towards Jerusalem. He spoke far less of the will of the Father than of the kingdom. But the words are not what matters. "The Kingdom of heaven will not give entrance to every man who calls me Master, Master; only to the man that does the will of my Father who is in heaven." This will was decisive for him. In St. John much is revealed of how Jesus understood the will of the Father. It is food and drink for him to do the will of him who sent him. That he was sent, that he was messenger, in St. John's Gospel Christ speaks of it unceasingly. Over and over again: name and kingdom and will. To be God's servant, the Lamb of God, not to open his mouth, to be bearer of burdens for the whole world, Cross-bearer for outcasts, is all included in Christ's life. That is how the Father would have it, and the Son likewise. To think otherwise comes from Satan.

There is no break in the Lord's life. He always wished it as it was, even when temptation held him in its grip; the tempter was never able to separate him from the Father's will. He lived "not without a piercing cry, not without tears"; "Son of God though he was, he learned obedience in the school of suffering." To be obedient means to do the will of another, without holding back. One of the most significant statements of all Scripture is, that Jesus carried out his Father's will. When the Church reads the hymn to the Redemption in St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians, chanting it in the evenings of Holy Week, we kneel down: Christ "accepted an obedience which brought

him to death, death on a cross." That is the new beginning, new man is created and found to be obedient; what a blessed start for the new creation beginning with the second Adam, "the eldest-born among many brethren"; "he wins eternal salvation for all those who render obedience to him."

For us, for you!—Then the song soars triumphantly: "That is why God has raised him to such a height, given him a name which is greater than any other name." The name of Lord, which the first Adam coveted when in disobedience he wished to be like God. Now there is one who did the will of the Father wholly willingly, and who consumed our rebelliousness, our defiance, and all our sinfulness in the bitter chalice of suffering—a man like ourselves, but for one thing: he did not sin.

That is what we should think of when we venture to say with him these holy words: thy will be done .

Give us this day our daily bread

Whoever takes the Incarnation seriously has to take into account that the petition for bread was also part of Jesus Christ's prayer. He was Man among men, just as He was God of God. Forty days he fasted, "and at the end of them was hungry." He asked for a drink after a tiring walk. He ate and drank and people abusively called him glutton and drunkard; he attended the banquets of the Pharisees and the customs collectors and gathered large crowds round him for communal meals. On one of those occasions he said the grace familiar to his pupils and prayed for daily bread.

But alongside of this, we have that other word of his: "Man cannot live by bread alone; there is life for him in all the words which proceed from the mouth of God." Hunger and thirst, food and drink are for him symbols of a more real world than the one in which we shall never be truly satisfied. "Anyone who drinks such water as this will be thirsty again afterwards; the man who drinks the water I give him will not know thirst

any more. The water I give him will be a spring of water within him, that flows continually to bring him everlasting life." He praised the blessed who hunger and thirst after justice and promised that they should be filled. For he was indeed the Lord of the Messianic fount of salvation giving out food and drink in his Father's kingdom. For him, the Father's Will and the completion of his mission were the food he longed for. His disciples were to know this and to do as he did. Thus the prayer for bread points back and means the same as Name and Kingdom and the Father's Will.

But the Lord lets us penetrate still more deeply into the mystery of his Love. He himself is Bread, "the bread of life." The prophetic sayings St. John handed down to us were fulfilled on the evening before he suffered. Everything was focused upon that hour: "I have longed and longed to share this paschal meal with you before my passion." And now "the time had come for his passage from this world to the Father. He still loved those who were his own, whom he was leaving in the world, and he would give them the uttermost proof of his love." He said grace and handed them bread and wine, his body and the Blood of the covenant, so that they might eat and drink and proclaim his death till he comes. Earthly bread became the holy bread of eternal life—daily prayed for, daily given. It was on account of this bread that the Lord came down from heaven, and "he who eats of it never dies." On account of this Bread he went to the cross so that we might have life from his death.

Wonderful bread, in which death and life are resolved. "Lord, give us this bread all the while." Give us this day our daily bread.

*And forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive them that trespass against us*

Jesus became like us in all things, he became human as we are, sin excepted. Perhaps that is the most astonishing thing about him, the most disturbing, as Peter discovered: "Leave me

to myself, Lord; I am a sinner." He can repeat each petition of the "Our Father" with his disciples, but not "forgive us." "This is to be *your* prayer." "Can any of you convict me of sin?"

And yet "he is a friend of publicans and sinners": "I have come to call sinners, not the just." And he was hailed in these words: "Look, this is the Lamb of God; look, this is he who takes away the sins of the world." The holy Servant of God, "He did no wrong . . . on the cross, his own body took the weight of our sins." "Christ never knew sin, and God made him into sin for us."

So sin and guilt do have a place in the life of our Lord. Our sin, our guilt. That is the truly great message of the New Testament, that our guilt will be forgiven. Because he died for us, we can pray: "Forgive us our trespasses." In the Blood of Christ our prayer has power and will be heard. "This, as always, is God's doing; it is he who, through Christ, has reconciled us to himself."

"Let us enjoy peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Through his death he freed us from the servitude of sin. We have received "the spirit of adoption which makes us cry out: Abba, Father." "Happy fault, that won so holy and so high a Redeemer!"

Now, no one can take credit to himself and make out he has not trespassed: "All alike are convicted of sin—not one of them acts honorably, no, not one."

Only one thing is valid: "We can boast of God's protection; always through our Lord Jesus Christ, since it is through him that we have attained our reconciliation." Whenever we pray for forgiveness, we acknowledge that we believe forgiveness really will be granted us. "Let us come boldly, then, before the throne of grace"; in praise and thanksgiving we can acknowledge we owe it all to "nothing else than the grace of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord who died, nay, has risen again, and sits at the right hand of God—pleading for us." We are filled with deep confidence and utmost trust when we pray in

the Lord's Prayer for forgiveness of our sins—"You have only to make any request of the Father in my name, and he will grant it to you."

The Lord himself teaches us to pray: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us." Just as he died for all, that is, "while we were still sinners," and God has forgiven us all and goes on forgiving—so we must forgive one another. That is the law of the new covenant!

"You must bear with one another's faults, be generous to each other, where somebody has given grounds for complaint; the Lord's generosity to you must be the model of yours."

Whenever we pray for forgiveness, we stand under the cross of our Lord. Then it is that our just and holy God holds judgment on sin and offers his Son to us as a means of reconciliation. And the word of judgment is, *forgiveness*. "Father, forgive them; they do not know what it is they are doing." Jesus put into practice what he taught. "He left you his own example; you were to follow in his footsteps." Nothing worse can happen to us than was done to Christ. We must stop being so grand: and "Yours is to be the same mind which Christ Jesus shewed—he dispossessed himself and took the nature of a slave, fashioned in the likeness of men." As servants of God we must follow the servant of God and forgive, and not be like the unjust servant of the parable, to whom the Lord said, "I remitted all that debt of thine, thou wicked servant, at thy entreaty. Was it not thy duty to have mercy on thy fellow servant, as I had mercy on thee? And his master, in anger, gave him over to be tortured until the debt was paid. It is thus that my heavenly Father will deal with you, if brother does not forgive brother with all his heart."

And lead us not into temptation

The life of our Lord was exposed to temptation and constantly under attack. In the wilderness, on the pinnacle of the

temple, on the high mountain—every time the tempter was there. What he wanted to see was rebellion against God for the sake of human honors, riches, power. Above all the latter: power. We have often read the story or heard it read. But what we forget is the sentence in St. Luke: "So the devil, when he had finished tempting him in every way, left him in peace until the time should come." Tempting him in every way: there we have matter for thought! It should make us wary, for how are we to be delivered from temptation—we to whom it is all too appropriate—when he was tempted in every way? And it should console us. For it is not as though our High Priest was incapable of feeling for us in our humiliations; he has been through *every trial*, fashioned as we are, only sinless.

Matthew and Mark tell us of a decisive hour in Jesus' life. He was initiating his disciples into the mysteries of his coming, suffering, cross, death and resurrection; "Whereupon Peter, drawing him to his side, began remonstrating with him; Never, Lord, he said; no such thing shall befall thee. At which he turned round and said to Peter, Back, Satan; thou art a stone in my path; for these thoughts of thine are man's, not God's." It was the same expression! "Away with thee, Satan." From all sides, Satan oppressed him with every kind of temptation, and from the very midst of the disciples, too. Seated in the upper room, on that evening when the hand of the betrayer lay upon the table, he said to them: "You are the men who have kept to my side in my hours of trial."

Our Lord's life in the midst of trials and temptations, as scripture shows, contains even deeper mystery: for there are no two ways about this Man so exposed to temptation and oppression: he never fell into sin. He always stood in God's bright light, clear-cut and plainly seen. He remained obedient. Though the prayer for forgiveness was never to include him, in Gethsemane he said: "Watch and pray, that you may not enter into temptation." He shares with us the weight of oppression; never was any man more violently menaced by the powers

of darkness—but he was wholly on God's side, and God cannot sin. For God, his honor, his will: for these was Jesus there, unequivocally and right into the extremity of God-forsakenness. And throughout he always did what his Father commanded, and remained secure in his love. As he was obedient, obedient even to the utmost demands of the cross, as he was found faithful under temptation, God is therefore faithful to us for his sake. Since Christ underwent temptation, God "will not allow us to be tempted beyond our powers. With the temptation itself, he will ordain the issue of it." Certainly the accuser, Satan, rises up against us, just as he tempted the Son of God, and demands of God the right to "sift us like wheat." But the Christ of the Passion takes our part and pleads for us. "It is because he himself has been tried by suffering, that he has power to help us in the trials we undergo." "Who will come forward to accuse God's elect, when God acquits us? Who will pass sentence against us, when Jesus Christ, who died, nay, has risen again, and sits at the right hand of God, is pleading for us? Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will affliction, or distress, or persecution, or hunger, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword? For thy sake, says the scripture, we face death at every moment, reckoned no better than sheep marked down for slaughter. Yet in all this we are conquerors, through him who has granted us his love. Of this I am fully persuaded; neither death nor life, nor angels or principalities or powers, neither what is present nor what is to come, no force whatever, neither the height above us nor the depth beneath us, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which comes to us in Christ Jesus our Lord."

But deliver us from evil

That immense confidence that speaks out so strongly in the eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans colors the whole of the New Testament. Sin is there, guilt, temptation, evil—but in

Christ it is all overcome and disarmed, and we are redeemed. Dread and oppression no longer have the last word. We should never forget this in praying the seventh petition of the Lord's Prayer. Our wording does not make it absolutely clear what the Lord meant. It would be better to say: Deliver us from the evil one, from the devil. And the devil, the tempter, was present in our Lord's life; he threatened him and oppressed him and brought him to the cross. But it was only for a while, and only for the dazed eyes of the world a reality. Satan's power was broken by him whom he tempted but did not cause to fall. Because he did not fall at their feet and worship them, the powers of this world nailed him upon the cross. But a few days before his death he said: "Sentence is now being passed on this world; now is the time when the prince of this world is to be cast out." When he came, Satan's power was over; he is the stronger, who can say: "I watched, while Satan was cast down like a lightning flash from heaven."

The life of Jesus was one long struggle with the father of lies. The devils screamed when he approached and came out of their victims. In him the kingdom of God really did come to us, for "he it is who has given himself up for our sins, to rescue us from the evil world that surrounds us." When we pray: Deliver us from the evil one, deliver us from evil—then we pray in reference to the tree of the cross upon which he was conquered who once had conquered on a tree. This seventh petition is not founded on fear, but carries its fulfillment with it. He who bid us repeat it has overcome the world, by which is meant the prince of this world. We are saved, saying the Lord's Prayer in utter trust in him who is the conqueror of Satan: "The Lord Jesus will destroy him with the breath of his mouth, overwhelming him with the brightness of his presence."

If the whole life of our Lord was spent fighting against the evil one and subduing him, thus gaining redemption and salvation for us, then we can understand why he tells us to pray for this. In the solemn hour of his prayer of dedication as High

Priest, he said: "Keep them clear of what is evil." But this prayer is preceded by a significant phrase: "I am not asking that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them clear of what is evil." To be in the world means to be tempted; it means to meet what is evil, to encounter oppression. But "there is a stronger power at work in you, than in the world"—the power of Christ himself. Because he prays for us, we can be saved, we are in fact saved. Jesus lives hidden in God, snatched from the fury of the serpent. There he is as one who "can give eternal salvation to those who through him make their way to God, he lives on still to make intercession on our behalf." It is out of trust in him that we can say: Deliver us from evil, deliver us from the devil. In our life, in fellowship with him and our prayers in communion with him, we too may say, as in St. John's first Epistle: "We are strong, with God's word dwelling in us always. We have gained our victory over the evil one."

CHAPTER THREE

“Our Father” in the Church Liturgy



I. THE LORD'S PRAYER IN THE OLD BAPTISMAL LITURGY

HOLY BAPTISM is the first important step in our life with Christ and through him with the Father and the Holy Spirit. The significance of this great event is stressed by the profoundly symbolic acts with which the Church adorns its rite, acts in which the Church demonstrates that divine grace is really and truly bestowed. For the candidates, the prayers illumine the mystery of what is taking place, while for outsiders, acts and words remain obscure and the significance is veiled.

One of the prayers of the baptismal liturgy is the “Our Father.” Divine in origin, sublime and all-embracing in range, it is rightly placed at the very heart of the ceremonies. The Church loves to crown her sacramental acts with the divine Word itself, which we have at first hand in this pure and holy prayer, which conveys the mystery of Christ in the same way as the baptismal ceremonies do.

In early Christian times, the sacrament was mostly administered to adults. A fairly long period of preparation preceded it.

The candidate for holy baptism, named "catechumen," was initiated into Christian doctrine, prayers and rites only stage by stage. Much of it was kept secret from outsiders, so as to ensure reverence towards the mysteries of Christ and to safeguard a holy act from the curiosity or mockery of the pagans. It was not until after the 6th century that the custom of secrecy disappeared; then divine service was held openly and doctrine and prayers could be expounded publicly too.

The creed, called "symbolum," and the "Our Father" were two of the Christian mysteries in which baptismal candidates were initiated. We see in what high honor these prayers were held and with what reverence they were regarded. The candidates learned them immediately before baptism. As baptism was usually administered in the Easter Vigil, they were taught the prayers during Lent, and the actual words were imparted them during the Bishop's "Scrutiny Mass."* This was a solemn ceremony called "traditio," whence our word "tradition," recalling the "traditio" or handing over of our Lord into the hands of his enemies. But a challenge on the moral plane was present too. Just as the disciples begged our Lord to teach them to pray and learned the "Our Father" from him, so did the candidates for baptism hear the holy words spoken by their Bishop, Christ's representative. They were given the Creed and the "Our Father" separately as a rule, in certain churches even on different dates. Between the day of the "traditio" and that of the "redditio" (the rendering), the prayers had to be learned by heart. The "redditio" was an equally solemn act of the whole community. In the presence of the Bishop, the candidates gathered in a raised part of the church, probably on the ambo, and repeated the text of the prayer from memory, aloud. Some that were too shy to do this could say it at another time before the priest.

When the Easter Vigil came, the night of their baptism, the

* Scrutinium: the examination the Bishop gave the candidates to test their competence and merit.

candidates prayed the "Our Father" for the first time after receiving the sacrament. It was said standing, looking up, with hands held open and raised in the "oranti" posture. Now at last the newly-baptized were in truth and in the full sense of the word, "children of the Father." We find this in the Apostolic Constitutions: "When the candidates come out of the baptismal bath, they say 'Our Father' for the first time." And Tertullian completes this sober statement of fact with a hymn-like appeal to the newly-baptized: "Now, ye blessed ones, whom the grace of God awaits, when you step out of that holy bath of re-birth and for the first time with your Mother (the Church) open your hands (to pray) with the brothers, then entreat the Father, entreat the Lord, that as a special favor, with grace (baptism) the bestowal of the charismen (confirmation) may be granted. 'Ask and the gift will come,' he said, 'seek, and you shall find, knock, and the door shall be opened to you.'"

Origen, too, records the solemnity of the first "Our Father." He draws a parallel from the Old Testament to illustrate the splendor of the Lord's Prayer. Just as Moses and his people passed through the Red Sea and left the pursuing enemy to founder in the waters where they themselves had walked across in safety, dry-shod, so young Christians pass through the bath of baptism, leaving the devil behind them together with sin. They come clean from the water of their salvation and advance full of joy, clad in white garments. Like the Israelites who, led by Moses and his sister, intoned and sang the hymn of jubilation and victory, the newly-baptized raise hearts and voices in thanksgiving and prayer in their "new song," the holy "Our Father." When it is so termed, the divine prayer shines out in all its brightness, reflecting the blessedness of eternal life.

Immediately after the Lord's Prayer came the anointing with holy oils; the sacrament of *confirmation* confirmed what the Lord had done to his own, and placed on the foreheads of the faithful the seal of the name of Christ, a name they were henceforth to hallow, as they had just prayed for its hallowing.

When both sacraments had been conferred, the Bishop gave his neophytes an address, telling them in so many words all that had been done to them, and what wonderful and divine acts they were. Quite often they took the Lord's Prayer as their text, expounding its inexhaustible content. That is why there are "Our Father" commentaries among the oldest Christian sermons we have, and the recorded texts that have come down to us reveal how frequently the holy prayer was a matter for commentary, particularly in connection with baptism.

In the course of the late 4th century and through the 5th, the acts of "traditio" and "redditio" came closer and closer together, and finally were united in a single Scrutiny-Mass. And the Bishop's address tended to disappear, a liturgical elucidation of the "Our Father" taking the place of the personal commentary. As the strict secrecy in which the holy rites and texts were imparted relaxed, the addresses came to be delivered earlier in Lent. Adult baptism gradually lapsed, and when the sacrament was mainly administered to children, the rite lost part of its significance as a ceremony of admission to membership of Christ's Body. The "Our Father" commentaries were no longer expressly related to baptism and preparation for it, but took their place in general catechetical work, addressed more and more exclusively to children. From Charlemagne's time we have a fine example in a disputation of scholars in which the "Our Father" is gone through in questions and answers. Its relevance to the sacrament of baptism is completely lost. Nonetheless the words of the Fathers are constantly echoed in the later texts, and to that extent baptism has a place in these later commentaries. mid

Even in our own days the child to be baptized has the Lord's Prayer "conferred" on him, even though the accompanying words of explanation have gone. The "redditio" has remained in that the godparent repeats the Lord's Prayer on behalf of the child. Godparents should remember that a Christian calls God his Father in recognition of his authority, and all other people

are henceforth his brothers. The Church continually insists on the obligation godparents have of seeing that their godchildren really make the "Our Father" their own and know what it is about.

Christians should bear in mind that the prayer they are praying is their baptismal prayer, the first prayer they ever prayed as members of the Church (and if they could not do it themselves, godparents were there to do it on their behalf), then its great significance will come home to them, a significance that radiates out from the "Our Father" over the whole of life. The restored rite for the Easter Vigil is a reminder of this, when the "Our Father" is prayed as part of the renewal of baptismal vows.

There is no lack of "Our Father" commentaries for the intention of baptismal candidates, and we have selected one each from Palestine (Cyril of Jerusalem), North Africa (Augustine), Upper Italy (Peter Chrysologus), a formal one from Rome in the time of the barbarian invasions (Gelasianum) and the meager remnant of a once abundant source, found in a Frankish Missal.

CYRIL OF JERUSALEM

Address to Candidates for Baptism:

After the prayer for the deceased, we will now expound the one the Savior delivered to his disciples in which with clear conscience we call God, Father, saying: *Our Father who art in heaven*. O too great love of God to men! On those who fell away from him and encountered most great evils, he bestowed forgiveness of sins and communion of grace to the extent that he would even have them call him Father. Our Father who art in heaven. Heaven consists of those who bear the stamp of heaven (I Cor. 15:49), among whom God lives and moves (II Cor. 6:16).

Hallowed be thy name. God's name is holy in essence, whether we say it is so or not. But it is continually being unhallowed by sinners, as is written, "The name of God has become a reproach

among the Gentiles, because of you" (Rom. 2:24; Isa. 52:5), and therefore we pray that among us the name of God be hallowed; not in order that what was previously unholy be made holy, but that it be holy in us when we ourselves are hallowed and do what is deserving of sanctification.

Thy kingdom come. A pure soul can confidently say: thy kingdom come. For whoever harkens to Paul's words: "You must not then allow sin to tyrannize over your perishable bodies" (Rom. 6:12), and keeps himself clean in deed and thought and speech, can say to God: thy kingdom come.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. The divine and holy angels do God's will, as David says in the Psalms: "Bless the Lord, all you angels of his; angels of sovereign strength that carry out his commandments" (Ps. 102:20). When you pray thus it means: As thy will is done among the angels, so be it done on earth in me, Lord.

Give us this day our real bread. Ordinary bread is not our real bread; rather it is that holy Bread that is real, intended for the life of the soul. This bread does not go into the stomach to be discarded in due course, but is given to your whole nature for the benefit of body and soul. "This day" stands for "daily," as Paul also says: "While the word Day has still a meaning" (Heb. 3:13).

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. For we have many sins; in word and thought we offend and do much that is worthy of condemnation. "Sin is with us; if we deny that, we are cheating ourselves" as St. John says (I John 1:8). We make a pact with God, we pray him to forgive our sins as we forgive our neighbors theirs. When we think what we obtain at what cost, then we will no longer delay nor refuse to forgive one another our offenses. When we are sinned against it is a small matter and of little weight, it can easily be forgiven; but what we do against God is immense and can only be effaced through his love towards men. Therefore be careful, on account of small and insignificant sins committed against yourself, not to shut yourself off from remission of the heaviest sins by God.

And let us not fall into temptation, Lord. Is the Lord teaching us to pray that we should not be tempted at all? Then what does this other passage mean: "A man will not learn until he is tested by discipline" (Wisdom 34:9), and again: "Consider yourselves happy indeed, my brethren, when you encounter trials of every sort" (James 1:2). But perhaps "falling into temptation" means

the same thing as "foundering in temptation"; for temptation is like a flood that it is difficult to cross. Those who do not founde in temptation are like excellent swimmers and will not be drawn down under the water; but the others enter in and sink, as Judas did, for example, who entered into the temptation of avarice and did not swim but went under and was suffocated, body and soul. On the other hand Peter entered into the temptation of denial, and he did not sink but swam bravely and was freed from the temptation.

Hear, too, in other passages, the chorus of immaculate saints who give thanks for their freeing from temptation: "Yes, Lord, thou hast put us to the proof, tested us as men test silver in the fire; led us into a snare, and bowed our backs with trouble, while human masters rode us down; our way led through fire and water, but now thou hast brought us out into a way of repose" (Ps. 65:10-12). You see how confidently they rejoice because they got across and did not sink in the mire. Now thou hast brought us out into a way of repose, we read; that they came to rest means that they were freed from temptation.

But deliver us from evil. If "Let us not fall into temptation" means: not being tempted at all, it would not have attached to it: "but deliver us from evil." Evil, that is the enemy, the demon from whom we pray to be delivered. Then, having completed your prayer, you say: *Amen*. With this Amen, which means, Let it be so, you seal all that is contained in this prayer from God.

AUGUSTINE

Second sermon on the holy "Our Father," given to the baptismal candidates on Monday in Holy Week.

You have rendered the Creed, in which the whole faith is contained in brief form. I told you before what the Apostle Paul says: "How should you pray to one in whom you do not believe?" And now that you have received the manner of believing in God, and retained and repeated it, receive today the manner of praying to God. The Son himself taught the prayer to his disciples and his faithful as you heard when the Gospel was read. We have hope of receiving a hearing when such a counsel as this has dictated the petitions. The Father's assessor—you have acknowledged that he

sits at the right hand of the Father!—himself is our counsel who is also our future judge. He will come from thence (that is, from the Father) to judge the living and the dead. Now take and retain this other prayer which you will render in eight days' time. But whoever among you has not made a good rendering of the Creed, still has time to learn it; on the Saturday you must say it aloud, and all who are present will hear it: on the coming Saturday when you will be baptized. But today week you must repeat the prayer which you have heard today.

It begins like this: "*Our Father who art in heaven.*" We find a Father in heaven; we must watch how we live on earth. Whoever finds such a Father as this must live in such a manner that he is worthy to enjoy his heritage. But we say together: *Our Father*. What an honor! The Emperor says it, the beggar says it; the slave says it, his master says it. Together they say, *Our Father who art in heaven*. They acknowledge by this that they are brothers, that they have *one* Father. And it ought not to be against the grain for a master to have his slave as brother, whom Christ wished to have as brother.

We continue: "*Hallowed be thy name, Thy kingdom come.*" The hallowing of God's name consists in this, that we ourselves shall be holy. His name is always holy. We wish, too, for his kingdom to come. It will come, even if we do not wish it. Wishing and praying for his kingdom to come simply means wishing he would make us worthy of his kingdom, so that it does not perchance come but—save the thought—not to us. Indeed for many it does not come, even when it comes. It comes for those who are told: "Come, you that have received a blessing from my Father, take possession of the kingdom which has been prepared for you since the foundation of the world." It will not come for those who were told: "Go far from me, you that are accursed, into that eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels." So when we say: *Thy kingdom come*, we pray that it may come to us. What does it mean, that it come to us?—That it find us being good. Therefore we pray him to make us good. Then his kingdom does indeed come to us.

We pass to the next: *Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*" The angels serve thee in heaven, we want to serve thee on earth. The angels in heaven do not offend thee, we want not to offend thee on earth. As they do thy will, so would we do it. And here what are we praying for, if not to be good? If we do indeed

do the will of God—he does it without any doubt—then his will is done in us.

We can understand it quite well in another way, too: Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. We accept God's command and it pleases us, it pleases our spirit. We rejoice in God's law according to the inner man. Then his will is done in heaven. Our spirit can indeed be likened to heaven, our body to earth. Then what is meant by: Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven? As our spirit is pleased with the command, let our body agree with it. And the state of war immediately disappears—the one the Apostle describes: "The impulses of nature and the impulses of the spirit are at war with one another" (Gal. 5:17). When the spirit opposes the body, God's will is already done in heaven; when the body does not oppose the spirit, then his will is already done on earth. Perfect unanimity will occur only when he wills it. World-warring, so that victory be won!

And one can quite well understand it like this, too: Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven, if we take the Church as heaven, preserved by God; but as earth, the unbelievers, of whom it is said: "Earth thou art, and to earth shall thou return" (Gen. 3:19). So that when we pray for our enemies, for the enemies of the Church, the enemies of the Christian name, that his will be done "on earth as it is in heaven,"—that means: as in thy faithful, be it also in thy detractors, so that all may be "heaven."

Then comes: "*Give us this day our daily bread.*" We can simply take it as meaning that we make this prayer for our daily physical needs, to obtain them plentifully and not to feel the lack of them when we have not got them in abundance. Daily bread it is so long as it is "today" (that is, until Judgment Day). We live daily, get up daily, daily eat our fill, daily go hungry, daily thirst. Our daily bread—why did he not say, and covering? Our daily bread consists in food and drink, our covering in clothing and blankets. There is nothing man more longs to have. The Apostle says so, too: "Empty-handed we came into the world, and empty-handed, beyond question, we must leave it; why then, if we have food and clothing to last us out, let us be content with that" (I Tim. 6:7ff.). Let covetousness disappear, and nature is rich. When we pray for our daily bread, we pray for all that is necessary to our bodies here on earth. But what does Jesus Christ say? "Make it your first care to find the kingdom of God, and his approval, and all these things shall be yours without the asking" (Mat. 6:33).

This petition can be given a very good meaning too: Give us this day our daily bread, thy Eucharist, daily Food. The faithful know indeed what they receive, and it is good for them to receive the daily bread so necessary for these times. They pray for themselves, that they may be good, that they will persevere in righteousness, faith and good living. They wish it, they pray for it, for if they do not persist in good living they will be separated from that bread. So what does it mean: Give us this day our daily bread? We should so live that we shall not be separated from thy altar!

And God's word, too, that is daily opened to you and broken for you, is daily bread. And as the body hungers for that other bread, so the spirit for this. That is why we can pray so simply; and all that is needful for our body and our soul in this life is included in "daily bread."

"*Forgive us our trespasses*" we say, and so we ought, for we say the truth. Who lives on this earth and has no debts? What man lives in such a manner that this prayer is unnecessary? He can puff himself up, but he cannot justify himself. It would do him good to imitate the publican and not to preen himself like the Pharisee who went up to the Temple and boasted of his merits, but concealed his sores. But the one who said: Lord have mercy on me, poor sinner! knew why he had come up there. So our Lord Jesus taught—consider it well, my brothers!—so our Lord Jesus taught his disciples to pray, those great first apostles of his, our leaders. When the leaders pray for remission of their sins, what is their following to do?

You know that in the Creed which you rendered, you named among other things the forgiveness of sins. The forgiveness of sins is, on the one hand, vouchsafed once for all (in baptism); on the other hand it will, so long as we live here, be granted in the Lord's Prayer*. Therefore we say: Forgive us our trespasses.

God enters upon a solemn contract with us and gives us a sure pledge, when we say: "*As we forgive them that trespass against us.*" Whoever would effectively say: Forgive us our trespasses, let him say in truth: As we forgive them that trespass against us. When he does not say this or says it deceitfully, he says the other part in vain. This above all we urge on you who are approaching holy baptism: Forgive everything from your hearts! And you, the faithful, who on this occasion hear this prayer and its interpreta-

* Cf. pp. 85, 261.

tion, forgive from your hearts all that you have against anyone. Forgive it in that place God can see into. Sometimes, forgive a man verbally, and keep to it in your heart, and do not fear God's eye upon you. On with you, forgive! Whatever it may be that up to now you have against anyone, forgive it at least during these days. The sun should not have gone down on your anger, and yet many suns have set. Let your anger settle down too, for we are celebrating the day of the great Sun (Christ); that Sun of which the Scripture says: "To you that honor my name there shall be a sunrise of restoration, swift-winged, bearing redress" (Mal. 3:20).

Improve yourselves! If you had scorpions or serpents in the house, how you would set about ridding your home of them in order to live in safety! But you are angry, and your anger grows stale in your hearts; it goes deeper and deeper. So many scorpions, so many serpents! And that house of God, our heart, do you not wish to cleanse it? Then do what was said: As we forgive them that trespass against us, and then you can securely say: Forgive us our trespasses. Without sin you cannot live here on earth. But there is a difference between those great crimes which, for your salvation, will be absolved in baptism, and which you must always keep clear of, and those daily sins without which a man cannot live, here. For those, the daily prayer is requisite with its firm contract. So that you may cheerfully say: Forgive us our trespasses, say too, in truth: As we forgive them that trespass against us.—So far we have spoken of past sins; what comes next?

"And lead us not into temptation." Forgive what we have done, and grant that we commit no other sins. For whoever is overcome by temptation commits a sin. . . . But sin engenders death. Fear death! If you do not fear sin, then fear what sin leads to. The sin is sweet but death is bitter. . . .

Sins are to be forgiven; past sins are to be forgiven, future ones are to cease. But here we cannot live without them: they are either small, or tiny, or light. But the tiny and light ones are not to be underestimated either. Tiny drops fill the rivers. And the small ones should not be underestimated. Through the cracks in the ship the water pours in, the hold fills up, and if no one takes care the ship sinks. But the sailors do not desist, they are busy with their hands; they are busy bailing out the hold every day. So should your hands be busy, daily bailing out the hold. What does it mean: to have busy hands? They must be busy giving! Do good works, and then let your hands rest! Do as much as you can; take from

where you can; give joyfully, and then you can safely send up your prayer.

There follows: "*But deliver us from evil.*" To want to be freed from evil is to acknowledge that one is caught in it. That is why the apostle writes of "hoarding the opportunity that is given you, in evil times like these" (Eph. 5:16). "Long life and prosperous days, who would have these for the asking?" (Ps. 33:14). If all men in this life have nothing but bad days, who would not want to see good days? Therefore do what follows: "Keep thy tongue clear of harm, and thy lips free from every treacherous word. Naught of evil cherish thou, but rather do good; let peace be all thy quest and aim" (Ps. 33:15). Then you are clear of the bad days and what you prayed comes true: Deliver us from evil.

PETER CHRYSOLOGUS

Address to Catechumens:

Our Father. Which should shake us more profoundly, that God gives himself to the earth, or that he gives us heaven; that he enter into the fellowship of our nature, or that he let us enter into the fellowship of Godhead; that he take death upon himself, or that he save us from death; that he be born to servitude, or that he engender us as free men; that he take on our poverty, or that he make us his heirs, his only joint-heirs? It is indeed dread-inspiring when earth is turned into heaven, when man is transformed by Godhead, when those who endure the lot of slaves gain the right to be masters. Dread-inspiring though it be, nonetheless, my dear children, as we have not to do with a doctrine but with a command, let us enter in where love calls, where love draws, where love welcomes. May our inmost self acknowledge God the Father, may our voice call him, our tongue call him, our spirit confess him, and may all that is in us give way to grace, not dread. For he who turns the Judge into the Father would be loved, and not dreaded.

Who art in heaven. When you say this, you should not conceive it as though he were not on earth, you should not see it as though he were enclosed in one place, he who encloses all things in himself; but understand it in such a way that by holy living you show yourself worthy of the holy Father. He proves himself a child of God who is not darkened by human vice but rather shines forth in virtue.

Hallowed be thy name. Of whatever race we are, we bear his name. That is the content of our petition, that his name, which is holy of itself and through itself, may be hallowed in us. The name of God will indeed either be honored by our acts or disgraced by our deeds. Hear what the apostle said: "The name of God has become a reproach among the Gentiles, because of you" (Rom. 2:24).

Thy kingdom come. When did God possess no kingdom? We pray then that he who for himself always possessed a kingdom, may now also reign in us, so that we too may reign in him. The devil has reigned, sin has reigned, death has reigned, and mortal man was long imprisoned. So we pray that under the reign of God the devil may be vanquished, sin may be abolished, death may die, prison itself be imprisoned; that we may reign as free men unto eternal life.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. That is the kingdom of God, when on earth as it is in heaven, only the will of God is done, when in all only one God is, and lives, and acts and rules, and is wholly God, according to the apostle: "So that God may be all in all" (I Cor. 15:28).

Give us this day our daily bread. He who gave himself to us as Father, who accepted us as his sons, who made us his heirs; who raised us through his name, who gave us his glory and his kingdom, he himself adds to all this, that we should ask for our daily bread. In the midst of God's kingdom, in the midst of God's benefactions—what is man in his poverty still asking for? And the Father—so good, so kind, so generous—does he grant his children bread only when they ask for it? What becomes of the words: "Do not fret over your life, how to support it with food and drink; over your body, how to keep it clothed" (Matt. 6:25). He requires us to ask for the very thing he is always forbidding us to think about; what are we to make of it? The heavenly Father tells us that as sons of heaven we should ask for heavenly bread. He himself said: "I myself am the living bread that has come down from heaven" (John 6:51). He is the bread that was sown in the womb of the Virgin, leavened in his human flesh, shaped through suffering, baked in the oven of the tomb, seasoned in the Church, offered on the altars—this bread he distributes as heavenly bread to the faithful daily.

And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us. If you, o man, cannot be without sin, yet are always

wanting to be let off the whole of your guilt: forgive, at all times, yourself! In so far as you want the promise to apply to you, so far grant forgiveness. As often as you would be forgiven, so often grant forgiveness. And in so far as you want everything to be forgiven you, forgive everything! O man, learn to see that by forgiving others you have given forgiveness to yourself.

And lead us not into temptation. For in this temporal state, life itself is a temptation—A trial, said Job, is man's life—so we pray that God leave us not to our judgment, but that he surround us in all our doings with fatherly love, and strengthen us on our ways with his heavenly guidance.

But deliver us from evil. From what evil? From the devil indeed, from whom nothing but evil originates. So we beg to be freed from evil because unless a man is freed from wickedness he cannot enjoy what is good.

SACRAMENTARIUM GELASIANUM*

Liturgical formula for the imparting of the "Our Father":

Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ taught his disciples, among other saving precepts, how they should pray; he granted them the form of prayer which you know thoroughly from your last lesson. Now, my beloved, mark how he taught his disciples to pray to his almighty Father: "When thou art praying, go into thy inner room and shut the door upon thyself, and so in secret pray to thy Father." By inner room he did not mean a dark room but he would have us know that the inmost part of our heart should be opened to him alone. And when he said we should pray with the door shut he meant we should shut our hearts to wicked thoughts by means of that mysterious key, so that with closed lips we can speak to God with a blameless spirit. For our God listens to our faith and not to our voices. And thus with the key of faith our bosom will be shut to the inspirations of the devil. It is only to be opened for God, whose temples we acknowledge ourselves to be,

* A "Sacramentary" is a liturgical book containing those prayers that are spoken by the bishop or priest at Mass and at the consecrations and blessings associated with the Mass. It does not contain the sung parts and lessons.—The "Gelasianum" is composed of Roman prayer material of the 6th century, in the form in which it was known in the 7th century in Gaul.

so that he who dwells in our heart may also be the advocate of our petitions. Words of God, Wisdom of God, Christ our Lord, teach us, then, to pray:

Our Father who art in heaven

Hear the voice of freedom, full of confidence. You shall live according to it, too, in order to be sons of God and brothers of Christ. Who, by any chance, would dare to call God his Father, when he deviated from his will? Therefore, beloved, prove yourselves worthy of divine adoption, for it is written: "But all those who did welcome him he empowered to become the children of God" (John 1:12).

Hallowed be thy name

That does not mean that God will be hallowed because we praise him as holy, he who is holy for evermore; but we pray that his name be made holy in us; so that we, hallowed by his baptism, may persevere in what we have begun to be.

Thy kingdom come

Does our God not rule and reign fully and entirely, then, he whose kingdom is everlasting? When we say: thy kingdom come, we ask that the kingdom promised us by God may come to us through Christ's blood and suffering.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven

That is to say, may thy will be done, and what thou willest in heaven be done by us on earth blamelessly.

Give us this day our daily bread

We must take this petition in its spiritual meaning. Our bread is Christ, after all, Christ who said: "I myself am the living bread that has come down from heaven." We say it daily, because we always have to beg to be kept intact from sin by means of it, and to be worthy of the heavenly food.

And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them who trespass against us

This clause indicates that we can get rid of our sins in no other

way than by remitting the debts others owe to us. As our Lord says in the gospel: "If you do not forgive them, your heavenly Father will not forgive your transgressions either."

And lead us not into temptation

That is to say, let us not be led astray by the tempter, the author of evil. Scripture indeed declares: "God does not tempt men to evil." The devil rather is the tempter. In order to overcome him the Lord asked us to "*Watch* and pray that you may not enter into temptation."

But deliver us from evil. Amen.

This is the same as the Apostle's query—what should they pray for? The one almighty God wants us to pray to him, so that what human frailty cannot safeguard, he may graciously preserve, who is Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit forever and ever. Amen.

Now the Deacon speaks:

Stand in reverence and in silence and listen attentively, beloved, you have received the holy mysteries of the Lord's Prayer; now, when you go away, may it remain in your heart forever, that you may be perfect in Christ and worthy to entreat God's mercy and receive it. Powerful is our Lord, may he lead you who have come to the faith to the bath of rebirth! As for us who have imparted to you the mystery of the Catholic faith, may he let us attain with you to the heavenly kingdom. Who lives and reigns with God the Father, in unity with the Holy Spirit, to all eternity. Amen.

FRANKISH MISSAL

Liturgical formula relating to the imparting of the "Our Father":

Prologue:

When his disciples asked him how they were to pray, our Lord and Redeemer not only gave them the form of a prayer but also showed them with what recollection and purity they ought to pray, as indeed that passage of Holy Scripture showed us: "... go into thy inner room and shut the door upon thyself and so pray

to thy Father in secret." When he says inner room he does not mean a dark place but the stillness of our heart, that is, with the mysterious key of faith we close our heart to evil thoughts, and with closed lips speak with God from untarnished souls. For our God harkens to faith and trust, not to a voice! Therefore "the Word, the Truth," our Lord Christ, taught us this prayer so that we, too, may say: "Our Father."

Epilogue:

Dearly beloved, we have made known to you the prayer and creed of the Catholic faith. Now you will have as teacher of doctrine this primicerius [one of the senior clergy in an episcopal church] and his assistant here, who are to teach it to you just as you have heard it, without altering a word. Powerful is our Lord to lead you to the bath of regeneration, you who have come with such eagerness to the faith. As for those of us who together bestowed on you the mystery of the Catholic faith, may he let us attain to the heavenly kingdom together with you. May our Lord Jesus Christ grant this, to whom be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

2. THE "OUR FATHER" IN THE MODERN BAPTISMAL LITURGY

Child Baptism

The child is brought into the church with the stole laid upon it, while priest and godparents together repeat the Apostles' Creed and the Lord's Prayer. As we have here a last remnant of the old "traditio" and "redditio symboli et orationis dominicae" (imparting and rendering of the Creed and "Our Father"), the godparents will consider this prayer said together less as a confession of their own faith and a prayer of petition on their own behalf, than a reminder of the obligation they have accepted to watch carefully over the faith of their godchild and his Christian life, with prayer as its finest flower.

Adult Baptism

The exorcism (renouncing the devil) is not the same for men and women. At the priest's command (Pray, chosen one, kneel

down and say: Our Father . . .) the male candidates kneel and pray "Our Father" down to "but deliver us from evil," whereupon the priest says: "Stand up, finish your prayer, and say: Amen." Then the godfather makes the holy sign of the cross on the forehead of his godchild, saying: "In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit," and the priest does likewise. Then comes a prayer with the laying on of hands . . . and the exorcism Then the exorcism is repeated twice, preceded each time by the Lord's Prayer and the sign of the cross in the same way. And when all the men candidates have been exorcised, it is the turn of the women, upon whom the exorcism is performed likewise, with the same sequence of prayers and ceremonies.

LUDWIG EISENHOFER

3. OUR FATHER IN THE LITURGY OF THE MASS

In the catechetical teaching on the "Our Father" given to candidates for baptism, the transition from baptism to the holy Eucharist was an easy one. Indeed, in the Easter Vigil, of God's loving kindness, and as pledge of their adoption, the newly-baptized received the Eucharistic Bread for the first time. Partaking in Christ's resurrection, they had immortality bestowed on them, and in union with the risen Lord were able to enjoy a foretaste of eternal life. The explanations given in the sermons were concerned with the rite itself, with the Lord's Prayer following baptism and leading on to Communion. In the prayer, it is the opening words, "Our Father," and the petitions for bread and forgiveness, which contain special reference to the Lord's Supper. A sermon of St. Augustine's refers to the fifth petition as follows: "Then, after baptism, the Lord's Prayer is said. Why is it said before receiving the Body and Blood of Christ? In order that when we come to the words 'And forgive us our trespasses' we may be cleansed through the Lord's Prayer from our sins committed in human frailty. So that we may come forward in confidence and what we receive to eat and drink may not turn against us into judgment."

The practice of saying the "Our Father" as a prayer in preparation for Holy Communion was not confined to the Eucharistic feast of the newly-baptized, it was the custom from apostolic times for the faithful to pray it at the reception of the Sacrament of the altar, even before it appeared in liturgical texts as a part of the celebration of the Eucharist. This is clear from the meaning given to the fourth petition, which especially in the very earliest commentaries is interpreted eucharistically, even to the extent of overlooking the common meaning of "daily bread." We have absolute proof of the Lord's Prayer being used as a prayer of preparation for Holy Communion from the fourth century onwards. Only its place in the Canon of the Mass varies. But there is nothing remarkable about that, for in those times the liturgy was always adapted to local conditions.

In the Roman Mass, the present position of the "Our Father" goes back to Pope *Gregory* the Great. Gregory explained in a letter to Bishop John of Syracuse that the Mass of the Apostles consisted solely in the consecration with the oratio oblationis (the prayers of the Canon); all the rest was of later provenance. If another prayer was to be included in the Canon, the one to be considered before all others was surely the Lord's Prayer. Gregory gave it its place immediately following the Canon so that it would still be said over the sacrificial elements on the altar. It was closely connected with the Canon, coming as it did in the sequence following the "Dominus vobiscum" and the "Sursum corda" of the high prayer of the Eucharist, and it was said as part of the Canon. Its intimate connection with the little act of praise at the close of the Canon is evident. Moreover the three first petitions of the "Our Father" to some extent recapitulate the Canon, and the Lord's Prayer repeats the "assurance of salvation" that culminates in the holy sacrifice. For at the very beginning of the Canon we call upon "our most gracious Father," and the whole celebration of this rite, an act of service to the Father, is done in reference to the Son. The

petition for the hallowing of God's name is like an echo of the three-fold Sanctus, as is also the short prayer of praise accompanying the elevation of the Host and chalice. The second petition, for the coming of the kingdom, is like a recapitulation of the two prayers of consecration. And when the Canon prays for peace in our day and for the granting of fellowship with the elect, signs of the heavenly kingdom are evident, too. "Thy will be done" expresses the spirit of devout obedience which must underlie all sacrifice. The realization in the Mass of Christ's sacrifice on the cross is the fulfillment of this most pure petition, and from their share in the sacrifice the faithful draw strength to carry out the will of God wholly and unreservedly.

"That the 'Our Father' was considered as a Communion prayer, both in the Roman liturgy of the early middle ages and in the non-Roman liturgies of West and East, is clear from the very fact that among the preparatory prayers it is the most important, coming at the moment Communion is about to be given; this is so in the missa praesantificatorium, which is simply the celebration of Communion itself, and (in most rites) in the Communion service for the sick." (Jungmann: *Missarum Solemnia*, II.)

There is another custom that throws light on the place the Lord's Prayer occupies in the Mass: it has a short preparatory, introductory prayer of its own, which serves to remind the faithful of the exalted character of the words which the Lord himself taught. There is likewise a short introduction to the Gospel, a prayer for the cleansing of heart and lips, so that the speaker may fitly proclaim God's holy gospel. Some sort of preface or introduction to the Lord's Prayer is to be found in all liturgies. Sometimes these texts are of considerable length. Now and again they refer to the mystery of the day or the festival, but they do contain passages directly concerned with the Lord's Prayer itself.

In the Roman rite, this little preface is the same for all feasts and seasons. Quietly, the words call to mind that, "urged by our

Savior's bidding and schooled by his divine ordinance," we dare to repeat his prayer. So it is an act of daring to pray the Lord's Prayer. The Lord commanded it himself, otherwise we should be guilty of arrogance, with just punishment in store.

The preface introduces the prayer, which is rounded off, as it were, in the passage that follows the "Amen." This closing passage, called "embolism," takes up the last, or the two last, petitions and repeats them in expanded form. Sometimes it contains a reference to some all-embracing benefit, one referred to already in the prayer for peace before the consecration: Deliver us from evil and keep us in what is good! The appeal for divine assistance gives added stress to the prayer itself.

Deliverance from moral evil is also part of our preparation for a worthy reception of the heavenly gifts, and the reference to past, present and future evil reflects the desire that this state of preparedness may endure. The prolongation of the last petition thus constitutes a bridge over to the Communion prayers and the reception of Holy Communion itself.

PREFACES TO THE "OUR FATHER"

Mark Liturgy (Alexandria):

God of light, Author of life, Author of grace, Creator of the worlds, First Principle of knowledge, Bestower of wisdom, Treasure of holiness, Teacher of pure prayer, Benefactor of souls.

Heal us completely in soul, body and mind, so that together with thy holy disciples and apostles we may say this prayer: Our Father. . . .

West Gothic Liturgy (Spain):

FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT

Thou Word of the Father, who became Flesh to dwell among us, to us who already believe that thou didst come, grant that we may remain free of all infection of sin, as we cry from here on earth, saying in the words of thy prayer:

Our Father who art in heaven.	Amen.
Hallowed be thy name.	Amen.
Thy kingdom come.	Amen.
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.	Amen.
Give us this day our daily bread.	Amen.
And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us.	Amen.
And lead us not into temptation.	Amen.
But deliver us from evil.	Amen.

CHRISTMAS

What the way has shown so that we may follow; what life has taught so that we may speak; what truth has ordained so that we may hold fast to it: that do we cry from here on earth in dread of heart, to thee, Father most high: Our Father

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

For love of God, let us pray that God's love and goodness be effective in us, so that we, filled with the gift of divine power, can, from here on earth, worthily say the Lord's Prayer, the assurance of our salvation: Our Father

WEDNESDAY AFTER THE SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

God most high! We hasten to the source of light and to the fount of goodness and pray thee: Quicken our body, weakened by fasting, with the light of thy love. Give us the spirit of prayer. Harken to us in heaven, as we cry from here on earth: Our Father

LENT

We long, O Christ our God, to come pure to thy Table, and pray thee to cleanse us of our sins and grant up purity of body and soul; take away all that is false from our heart, lust from our body, lying from our tongue, offense from our behavior. Renew us through the glory of thy suffering, the wounds of thy cross, and through the glory of the resurrection. Be very merciful to the poor, accept the fasts of our lowliness and hear our voice that cries to thee: Our Father

WEDNESDAY BEFORE MAUNDY THURSDAY

Today the prayer thou taught us thyself shall prepare us, and to-morrow may thy Passion bind us to thee in the union of thy death.

EASTER

Lord, who dost purify and satisfy thy people gathered round thee with the Body of thy Lamb, do not permit any more that we be made unclean by the food of the devil whose head thou hast trodden under foot for the salvation of mankind, but grant to us, thy people and the sheep of thy pasture, the food of thy Word, and let us follow in the footsteps of thy Lamb, saying: Our Father

LOW SUNDAY (WHITE SUNDAY)

All you multitude of the Lord's people, who came together to the solemn feast of Easter joy; may your hearts be strengthened by that peace by which the Lord, entering through closed doors, today strengthened the hearts of his disciples. Then, at peace in the blood of the cross, we may cry from here on earth, at our Easter Mass: Our Father

PENTECOST

God, thou hast commanded us to pray to thee in spirit and in truth; overshadow us with the power of the Holy Spirit; may thy mercy and the promised grace of thy salvation descend upon us, believing as we do that our sins are forgiven us through Christ, so that the prayer on our lips be directed to thee, when we say: Our Father

AT THE NOVEMBER FAST

O Lord, we are ashamed to call thee Father, for we have lost the dignity of the children of God. But thou dost save us with fatherly loving kindness and dost not judge us according to our guilt. We therefore bring our prayers to thy fatherly goodness, although we are not worthy to be thy children, and beg thee: cleanse us of our sins at this time of our contrition. Unworthy though we be, to thee to whom our hearts incline, to our Father we cry, saying: Our Father

EXTENSION OF THE LAST PETITION OF "OUR FATHER"

Roman Liturgy

Deliver us, we pray thee, Lord, from every evil, past, present and to come; and at the intercession of the blessed and glorious ever-Virgin Mary, Mother of God, of thy blessed apostles Peter and Paul, of Andrew, and of all the saints, be pleased to grant peace in our days, so that with the manifold help of thy compassion we may be ever free from sin and safe from all disquiet. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, thy Son. . . . Amen.

St. James Liturgy

Lord, lead us not into temptation, Lord of hosts! for thou dost know our frailty; but deliver us from the wicked one, from all his works, from all his assaults and his craftiness; through thy holy name, which we call upon to guard us in our lowliness. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, belonging to Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and forever and in all eternity. Amen.

St. Mark Liturgy

Indeed, Lord, lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Thou knowest in thy great mercy that because of our frailty we cannot resist; but give us, with temptation, grace to remain steadfast throughout. For thou hast bestowed on us power to tread upon serpents and scorpions and the whole might of the enemy. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

West Gothic Liturgy

Let us serve thee, God, our Lord, freed from evil and forever fortified in what is good. Lord, make an end of our sins. Give joy to the sorrowful, grant release to prisoners, health to the sick, rest to the dead. Bestow on us peace and safety all our days. Quell the presumption of our enemies, and hear, O God, the prayers of thy servants and all faithful Christians, today and at all times. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, thy Son, who lives and reigns

with thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen.

“OUR FATHER” IN THE EUCHARISTIC FEAST OF THE EASTERN CHURCH

In place of the Sanctus, the priest says aloud: “Make us worthy, O Lord, to dare to call upon thee, prudently and not without justification.” And then all the faithful pray, not fearfully, not as slaves, but as children, as innocent little children, who through prayer and through the whole of this service of God’s and through the gradual unfolding of the holy rites, are put in a heavenly, angelic state of profoundest emotion of soul, in which man may speak directly with God as with the most tender father, and say the Lord’s Prayer. This prayer holds everything, and everything is contained in it that we need. With the petition “hallowed be thy name” we pray for what we have to ask for first of all: Wherever God’s name is held holy, all is well, for it means that people are living together in loving-kindness, for only through love is God’s name hallowed. The words: “thy kingdom come” call down upon earth the kingdom of justice and truth, for unless God come down there can be neither truth nor justice. To the words: “thy will be done” man is led by reason and faith; whose will could be more glorious than God’s? Who could measure better than the Creator himself what his creation needs? In whom should we confide, if not in him who himself is wholly saving salvation and perfection? With the petition: “give us this day our daily bread,” we ask for all that we need for daily sustenance, but our bread is God’s All-Wisdom, is Christ himself. He himself said: “It is I who am the bread of life,—he who eats of it never dies.” In the petition: “Forgive us our trespasses,” we beg that all our heavy burdensome sins may be taken from us; we ask for forgiveness for all we have done in sinning against our Creator himself in the form of our brothers; for every day, at every moment even, he reaches out a hand to us in this disguise, and begs with truly heart-rending lament for an act of kindness and mercy. The petition “lead us not into temptation” means that we pray to be protected from everything liable to confuse our minds and rob our souls of their peace. When we say: “Deliver us from evil,” we pray for heavenly joy; when evil gives way, joy immediately enters into our soul and though still on earth, we find ourselves, as it were, in heaven.

Thus, this prayer which the All-Wisdom of God taught us to pray, contains everything, and everything is included in it. To whom else should we pray, if not to the Father of all wisdom, who begot Wisdom before the world was? And now, when all present are to repeat this very prayer, not with their lips but in the pure innocence of a child-like heart, the choir in its high place must be correspondingly child-like too: singing the prayers not in rough, virile tones but like children, as though fondling the heart,—so must this prayer be sung on which the heavenly spring-like breath of heaven is perceptible, and the caressing hands of angels too, for in this prayer we now say, not "God" to him who created us, but we simply say: "Our Father." NICHOLAS GOGOL.

THANKSGIVING AFTER HOLY COMMUNION

How wonderful, glorious, and inexhaustible the "Our Father" is! Let it be our prayer of preference for thanksgiving after Holy Communion. Our Father, who art enthroned in heaven! Thou didst send us thy Son as heavenly Food; may the voice of our thanksgiving return to heaven praising thy name of Father. Thy kingdom come, the kingdom thy incarnate Word has told us of. Thy holy will, governing heaven and earth, be done. May we all have our share of Jesus, through the holy, daily-renewed offering of the Bread of Eucharist. Cleanse us of all guilt, through Jesus' Blood, flowing for us in this mystery of his bloodless suffering and death. Teach us to forgive, as thou hast forgiven us for the sake of thy only-begotten Son. Let us not succumb to temptation, but deliver us from the wicked enemy, the adversary of our salvation. Jesus conquered him; he cannot do him any harm: United with him, let us not fear, for the Lord is with us!

Christ, the Son of God and our brother in the flesh, who is mediator between God and man, is pledge and surety that this our prayer to the Father obtain a hearing. It is not so much we who pray the "Our Father" as Christ through us. When we are united to him, partaking of his Flesh and Blood, it rises to the Father not only from our lips but still more from his divine heart. He prays with us and for us with inexpressible power. So let us beg for no paltry, unworthy, all-too-human things, and yet for everything necessary to us pilgrims on earth, for our Father in heaven knows that we also need earthly things. He who clothes

the lilies of the field and feeds the birds of the air, gives his children clothing and food and drink, too. Borne on the solemn prayer of Christ's own praying, we make our supplication to the Father in consonance with his, fully confident that it will find a hearing. May the Lord send us help from his holy place, from heaven itself, and Christ will protect us from his throne here on earth, from the tabernacle. No doubt of it, now! Our prayer united with Christ's, our cry sent up to the Father together with Christ, has found a hearing.

ALBAN DOLD

4. "OUR FATHER" IN THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE AND IN THE RITES FOR THE SICK

The first Christian centuries did not know confession as we practice it today. Christians mostly came to baptism as adults, and were cleansed of the sins of their past life by this fundamental sacrament. They lived henceforth as "saints." But if someone fell into serious sin after baptism, he had to do public penance. Together with other public penitents, he was solemnly excluded from the Church by the Bishop on Ash Wednesday. For forty days the penitents had to lie outside the Church during divine service, weeping and sighing. In fasting, prayer and the giving of alms, and in the practice of other good works, they gathered in the fruits of their penance. They were then re-admitted to the Church community at a solemn ceremony on Maundy Thursday.

Otherwise, for the lesser sins of daily life the faithful received forgiveness without any special act of grace on the part of the Church, through the power of the fifth petition of the "Our Father"; men's faith in its potency was more lively in early times than it is today, as is clear from numerous passages in early Christian literature. Its most ardent advocate was St. Augustine, who constantly referred to the prayer "forgive us our trespasses," as the means of atoning for daily sins, insisting

that it was intended as a daily prayer to make good the unavoidable faults of our lives.

It would, of course, be wrong to draw too extensive consequences from this. Spiritual writers are at one with Church doctrine in stressing that the forgiveness we pray for in the Lord's Prayer is only meant to apply to venial sins.

The sacrament of anointing the sick also includes the "Our Father." The Priest recites it when the anointing is over, and it is followed by a series of antiphonic prayers and collects. The power of the Lord's Prayer to forgive sins makes its inclusion in this rite very appropriate, for the last anointing is, like penance, a sacrament intended to cleanse and purify. But a glance at the historical development of the rite shows that the "Our Father" in it originally belonged to the Communion that followed the anointing, and was therefore a prayer in preparation for Holy Communion. This is clearly evident in some medieval ordinances, where the "Our Father" is followed by an embolism, as in the Mass. Later customs left the prayer attached to the anointing rite, even when Communion was not given. The new Ritual for all the dioceses of Germany, for instance, goes back to the old order and at Communion for the sick, after the confiteor and absolution, it permits the saying of the following phrase: "Let us pray, beloved, as our Lord taught us to pray," after which all say the Lord's Prayer. Then the priest continues: "Lord, we beseech thee, of thy grace deliver this thy servant from evil and strengthen him (her) with the bread of life, the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, who with thee lives and reigns for ever and ever." All answer: "Amen."

The words of our exalted Master and Lord should be pondered. He does not say: If you forgive people their sins, your Father will forgive you sins of any kind, but he says: your sins. It was in fact a daily prayer that he was teaching, and he was speaking to the disciples, who were already justified. So what does "your sins" mean if not sins without which you could not exist, justified and sanctified though you may be If we call to mind whom he was

speaking to, then we shall realize that the words "your sins" apply only to the small ones, for the disciples had no more big ones left.

AUGUSTINE

The prayer is a judgment, when only one word contains the shadow of a lie.

JOHN CLIMACUS

This prayer cleanses us utterly from small daily sins. . . . After the Eucharist, this prayer is the highest and best means of salvation, or at least one of the best means against venial sins.

HUMBERT DE ROMANIS

If we are in a state of grace, this prayer, said with lively faith and humble trust, will serve to further our perfection. If we are sinners, this prayer, said penitentially, will serve to melt God's heart and to turn us back to God in sincere conversion. Even if we do not feel lively remorse, this prayer, united with a sincere desire to be more deeply affected, will help to gain for us the grace of contrition.

LOUIS DE BOURDALOUE

5. "OUR FATHER" IN THE LITURGY OF PRAYER

The place occupied by the Lord's Prayer in the official liturgy of the Church is best seen in close relation to the whole development of the Office itself, that is to say, the prayer that priests and members of religious orders are duty-bound to recite daily. The arrangement of the Office can be traced to a Jewish tradition and is thus of great antiquity. "Votive thanks seven times a day I give thee for the just awards thou makest," proclaimed the Prophet David in the 118th Psalm, and the seven-times-a-day prayer was taken on and practiced by the newly-founded Church, especially in the communities composed of Jewish Christians. The "Didache" or "Twelve Apostles Teaching" of the earliest Christian centuries mentions the "Our Father" as a prescribed form of prayer: "Three times a day shall you pray thus," meaning probably the prayer of the

third, sixth and ninth hours, a custom akin to that of the Jews. The "Apostolic Constitutions" also call upon the faithful to recite the "Our Father" at regular intervals. Cyprian calls it a "Public prayer to be recited in common." Presumably the Lord's Prayer was not said alone at the prescribed times, third, sixth and ninth hours, but as the culminating and closing prayer of the whole hour, as is still the case in the prayer-liturgy appointed for certain days, and in the Benedictine choir prayer.

In the Office as it is prayed by priests and religious today, the "Our Father" occupies an even more important position than was ordained for it in those early ordinances. Each of the seven Day-Hours opens with a Paternoster and closes with one. The Hour begins with the "aperi," then follows a quiet praying of the "Our Father." It is said in low tones, so that the worshipper may recollect himself in the spirit that should dominate the praying of the prayer aloud. And at the end, the monks pray "Our Father" in the so-called "litany," consisting of the "Kyrie Eleison," the collect for the day and the "Our Father." Only the beginning and the end of the Lord's Prayer are said aloud, the middle part being recited in a low voice. The whole prayer is said aloud or sung at Lauds and Vespers by the leader of the choir according to a rule of St. Benedict, Father of monks. In agreement with this plan, the Roman Breviary ordains for the "preces feriales" of Lent and Advent that the whole of the Lord's Prayer be said aloud. These preces feriales are a remnant of that general prayer that as early as the 4th century was prayed immediately after Vespers and Lauds. The custom of reciting the prayer sometimes in an undertone and sometimes aloud, may be traceable to the "arcane" discipline. The middle ages, however, gave praying in an undertone a more psychological significance; for instance, Durandus taught: "The Lord's Prayer is said quietly, first, so that by means of the low-toned words, a humble and prayerful spirit of worship may be shown. Secondly, so that we may withdraw into ourselves and concentrate upon the meaning of the words we are uttering; thirdly, because in prayer we speak with God, who scrutinizes

not only our words, but our hearts and loins; fourthly, to stress the fact that the efficacy of the prayer lies more in the devotion of the heart than in the tone of voice."

It suits the breadth of the nocturnal service that in Matins the "Our Father" should occur still more frequently. It opens and concludes the nocturnal hour of contemplative prayer, as in the Day-Hours, and it is also the introductory prayer to the twelve (or fewer) lessons. This the middle ages explain allegorically too, saying that the petitions of the "Our Father" grow out of our relationship to God, and the lessons are to tell us about it. In the 13th century, Sicard of Cremona wrote: "The Lord's Prayer is recited in order that the temptations of the devil be banished. For when the devil observes that we are about to read something pertaining to moral instruction, or recounting the victories of the saints over himself, then he makes war upon us with great violence."

Between the present position of the "Our Father" in the Church's prayer and the original forms of the office, there is not only a long lapse of time but also a variety of different conceptions of the nature of prayer in general and of the Lord's Prayer in particular. Not that the Lord's Prayer was not at all times highly revered and greatly treasured. A change of attitude is chiefly evident in reference to the custom of reciting "Our Fathers" in series, count for count. One is inclined to equate a quantitative increase with a decrease of inner participation. But this is a conclusion that can only apply in our present state of chronic absent-mindedness. It seems likely that the faithful of earlier times were more capable of the combination of lip-prayer and contemplative concentration.—The custom of piling up the numbers was widespread in the late medieval religious orders which prescribed this form of repetitive prayer for their lay brothers who knew no Latin. From the Orders, the custom spread readily as a popular devotion. The faithful often used knotted strings something like rosaries for saying prayers of this sort.

6. PRAYING AND SINGING THE "OUR FATHER": EXTERNAL RITES

When the Lord's Prayer is publicly or solemnly recited, the position taken by the faithful depends on the occasion. When in his address to baptismal candidates Tertullian mentioned the "opening of the hands" to pray the "Our Father," it meant that the newly-baptized stood with arms raised and spread out, the palms of their hands open and facing forward, as though they wanted to touch the sky with their finger-tips. This, the so-called orante position, was already customary in pagan antiquity, and its symbolic power, expressive of praise and of an expectation of gifts from above, is very appropriate to the Lord's Prayer, which does after all contain a giving and receiving, a questioning and answering, an upward and downward movement of petition, thanksgiving and praise.

In our day, the priest still adopts this position to recite the Lord's Prayer during Mass, whereas the faithful acknowledge the solemnity of the moment simply by standing up. The act of standing up is intended to be a joyous one, for in times of penance and fasting the Lord's Prayer is recited kneeling. This is not generally known, because Sundays even in Lent and in times of penance are not counted as fast-days, every Sunday or Lord's Day being a reflection of Easter, which is a time of rejoicing. Only on ferial or week days in Lent is kneeling the rule. In former times, certain churches practiced prostration on days that had no feast attached to them, that is to say, the faithful were required to stretch themselves out on the floor to recite the "Our Father." This position suits the second part of the prayer better, where the supplicant's attention is upon his own sinfulness, frailty and misery. The forgiveness petition particularly is a call to humble withdrawal within oneself. Once again it is St. Augustine who draws attention to this, with special emphasis: "When, as human frailty is liable to, we let our thoughts

stray to something inappropriate, when our tongue utters something unsuitable, when our eye is caught by something unseemly, when something unnecessary gives pleasure to our ear . . . whatever it is is cleansed on the spot by the Lord's Prayer: 'Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us.' "

Formerly it was recommended that in the fifth petition, at the admission of sinfulness, all, priests and faithful alike, should strike their breast on repeating the words: "and forgive us our trespasses."

In many place it was the custom during Mass for the priest to raise the chalice and Host at the Lord's Prayer. It was done to coincide with the saying of certain words—not everywhere the same—for instance, "thy will be done," or throughout the first three petitions. This significant act stressed the character of praise and thanksgiving of this prayer that the Church offers to God the Father in close communion with her Head, who sacrifices Himself on her altars. The elevation at the petition for bread was equivalent to showing forth the true and real bread of Christians. These rites were particularly favored in the middle ages. They throw light on the transition from a life focused on symbolic appearance to a life based on allegorical thought.

The manner of reciting the prayer, whether by priest and people together or by the priest alone, varies greatly from place to place. The priest says it as the representative of the people, even when he says it alone. This too may be a relic of the arcane order. If today in the Roman rite, at solemn High Mass, the priest says the "Our Father" alone, aloud, down to the sixth petition, and the seventh petition is said by the choir or by the people, this is simply a remnant of the custom when the Lord's Prayer, in the Roman rite, was at times recited by all the people. So it is not without significance that today, in Germany, for instance, in Masses that are not sung exclusively in Latin but are partly prayed in the vernacular, the Lord's Prayer is said by the whole congregation.

Most of the traditional forms of the Eastern liturgy show that the people prayed the Lord's Prayer together. According to the West Gothic rite, the participation of the people took the form of answering, after each petition said aloud by the priest, with a loud "Amen" or "For thou art God."

Since the time of Gregory the Great, the exalted nature of the prayer has been denoted by the addition of a *melody*. Only the high prayer of the Eucharist and the Epistle and Gospel were accorded this honor. The present Roman Missal gives two tones (melodies) for it, a simple one and a solemn one, the solemn one being musically the less complicated. The solemnity belongs to the inner monumental character of Gregorian chant. In slow rhythm the prayer rises to heaven, borne on clear simple notes. A moderation and freedom belonging to by-gone ages live again; moderation in the range of the notes, freedom in the unbound rhythm. The musical style of the Paternoster is a sort of liturgical recitative and has much in common with Psalmody and the sung tone of the Preface. The range of notes is small. In the solemn recitation there are three tones: *G*, *A*, *B*, to which the deeper *E* is added in the fifth petition. With three whole tones the melody rises to the Father in heaven and descends again in the same intervals. Here and there a row of syllables, or even half or whole phrases, are maintained on a single tone, animated by the rhythm of word and voice.

The earliest manuscripts of the sung Paternoster are from the high middle ages. In those days there were other melodies in addition to the ones in the present Roman Missal. A Sacramentary of the 11th century, from Monte Cassino, shows three methods of singing it; a printed Missal of the year 1513, from Minden, has four.

In the late middle ages, together with the rhythmical vernacular versions of the "Our Father," an appropriate tune was developed which served for the whole of the people's singing.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Lord's Prayer in Christian Life



INTRODUCTION

JUST AS THE SISTERS of Bethany served our Lord together, each after her own fashion, so for a Christian, active and contemplative life should never be divided off from one another. The life of prayer is not confined to the house of God; it goes on all the time. It lights up morning and evening, it comes at the beginning and end of meal-times, it sanctifies work and preserves the fruits of the fields, it adorns home and family festivities. When need and sorrow are present, when sickness knocks at the door or even death itself, prayer is like a bridge over into God's world yonder, where all is quiet, and where real happiness and true peace are to be found. Whoever crosses this bridge to bring his weary, sorrowful soul to God, finds wonderful consolation; help from "the name of the Lord" descends upon him, hope breathes again, and the load on his shoulders grows lighter.

If this is true of prayer in general, it is most particularly true of the "prayer of prayers," the Lord's Prayer. Its scope is so great that it includes all other prayers. Its words are like sign-posts, and they take into account all personal idiosyncrasies, they meet every mood and situation.

How the "Our Father" is supremely a prayer for married couples and families is illustrated in the extracts from the works of Gotthelf, Brentano, Hofmannsthal and Sigrid Undset. Here the divine words find their echo in the daily round, interwoven into life's most intimate situations, charging them with goodness, touching them with glory. The "Our Father" is a leaven that penetrates all life, so that whatever happens, happens in the presence of God. What is prayed comes to flower in the other world, and man who is placed in life like roots in the earth can blossom in heaven too.

Events of no importance at all get a covering "Our Father," and private hopes and wishes too, and are none the worse for it. They show how simple it is, how easily it slips into mind, how suitable it is for being a popular prayer. And that is what people take it to be, and use it accordingly. They feel it belongs to them. In fact, it happens that this prayer, at once so simple and so profound, gets confused in popular use with superstitious beliefs. Its length or the time it takes to pray it, for instance, become a sort of standard measurement; a few "Our Fathers" are declared to be a guarantee against bodily ill. The fruits of the field respond to its blessing, evil yields to its power. This is not nonsense, but a compound of naïveté, superstition and native wisdom spiced with human wit.

The trader's "Our Father" by Abraham a Sancta Clara is simply humorous. The popular preacher added a pinch or two of wisdom, just as the people themselves do. And that is what this Viennese preacher intended, it was his way of bringing it home. For the text shows how *not* to pray, and how the Lord's Prayer is misconsidered when said with thoughts wool gather-

ing and mind adrift among fragments of daily life and business concerns.

A remarkable word-play, with the "Our Father" as rune, brings us into the realm of Christian archaeology. Any number of attempts have been made to elucidate the so-called "Sator formula," a magic square made up of twenty-five letters set out in five lines of five letters each, each composing a word. The words can be read forwards or backwards, up or down, from left or right: they are always the same words. The lettering is usually Latin, sometimes Greek, not to mention Coptic and later Gothic forms:

S A T O R
A R E P O
T E N E T
O P E R A
R O T A S

Doubtless this attractive letter-game has a meaning, but for a very long time it remained dark. An attempt at translation and elucidation runs something like this: The sower / holds the plough / the worker / the wheels!—which would seem to imply a reference to country life. So there is nothing in the appearance of the formula to reveal that it grew on Christian soil. In fact the words and their meaning suggest a probably pagan author, as was indeed often the case.

What is remarkable, however, is that the twenty-five letters of the formula consist of the opening words of the Latin "Pater-noster" twice, *N* occurring only once and therefore serving as middle letter. If the letters for "Pater noster" are set out in the form of a cross, there are still four letters over, *A* twice and *O* twice. These two letters, the first and last of the Greek alphabet, have from very olden times been a symbol of the infinity and eternity of God. St. John used them in this sense in his

Apocalypse. If *A* and *O* are placed at the extremities of the cross, we have the following picture:

	A	
	P	
	A	
	T	
	E	
	R	
A	P	A
T	E	R
N	O	S
T	E	R
R	O	

Remembering the “arcane” custom, by which Christian prayers and the creed were kept secret from the heathen, it is not so far-fetched to suppose that this Paternoster cross was an older sign than the Sator formula, and that this figure in the shape of the sign of our redemption, composed of the letters of the first words of the principal Christian prayer, together with the letters symbolizing God, is the basis of the square Sator formula and was deliberately concealed in it. If this is so, the magic square of the Sator formula may be read as a “crux dissimulata,” a cross, that is, a secret sign among the Christians, which the enemy regarded as harmless but the Christians used to make themselves known to one another. It was found on bronze medallions and amulets, in later times with the Christus monogram.

In the Lord's Prayer, the petition for bread covers all bodily requirements, the most important of which are met in the daily meal. Both pious and poetic minds went to work on this peti-

tion, expanding it, expatiating on it, adorning it, so that in grace at table our thoughts are led from the loaf of bread on the table to God's out-of-doors, sod and blossom, tree and the fruit of the earth. Other graces for meal-times give a feeling of the weary way that had to be gone before the meal was ready as bread. And from the prayer for bread comes the prayer of thanksgiving for it, for there is a proper connection between prayer and thanksgiving and it was a tradition from Gospel times: at the Last Supper, when Jesus took bread into his hands, he gave thanks.

After bread, a roof over one's head is the most urgent of life's necessities. It is not outside the scope of the "Our Father" to be used in blessing the home. The passage quoted can be framed and hung on the wall by the front door, telling all comers of the Christian spirit that reigns in the home. Guests are welcomed to the fireside, and the blessing accompanies the home-dwellers when they set off on a journey. So when the Lord's Prayer is said at family prayers the petitions apply to the guests in the home too, as well as to those who belong there but are now away.

In no human life does one rounded happy day follow another in an unbroken series with no mishaps: everyone comes to points where the fragility of life is all too apparent, days when but for God, life would appear senseless and void. How the Lord's Prayer can at such times be a touchstone and a plumb-line for what to do next, is shown in the texts, "In times of trial." In Sigrid Undset's epic, *Kristin Lavran's Daughter*, the "Our Father" runs like a red thread through the whole story, as it does in Gotthelf's *Money and Mind* too. Only short extracts could be used here. In Sigrid Undset's work, though the scene is set in the distant past, the characters are real live people we can understand. And Gotthelf's novel has people in it whose struggle Godwards is all the harder for their strength of character. Again and again it is a phrase from the "Our Father" that

illuminates a critical moment and turning-point of the conflict in their souls.

In these human storms, what should be done, and what is better left, is not always clear in real life either. Darkness often confuses the issue between good and bad, or the bad thing is done out of habit, till conscience is gradually worn down and dulled. Here too the "Our Father" has its place and offers help. It can educate conscience. Not that the Lord's Prayer should be reduced to a mere rule of thumb for moral behavior, which is a profanation; the word of God is far too exalted and sublime for that. Nonetheless, numbers of authors have seen the "Our Father" as a picture of order on earth, a mirror of heavenly order. Why should we not straighten out our lives and get our consciences right, in the clear reflection of this heavenly order? Very often the Church Fathers and the theologians of the middle ages put questions to their hearers in their commentaries on the "Our Father," questions that were matters of conscience. In the passage on "The Our Father as mirror for conscience," Joseph Gülden is more concerned with "the much neglected general training of conscience, and less with the particular examination of conscience before confession. Naturally, that is done from the point of view of declaring one's sins. Whereas the general training is directed towards the positive purpose of making God's will known, as we come across it in the 'Our Father,' 'the breviary of the whole gospel,' the standard for our conscience and our Christian life."

The "Our Father" has its place at the beginning of each and every Christian life, and at the blessed end of it too. At the point of death, people accustomed to prayer want briefly to commend their whole life to their Father in heaven. And what prayer recapitulates the human situation more succinctly than the Lord's Prayer? All the negligences of a lifetime can be made good in a fervent once-over of the seven petitions! At the point of death, when strength is failing visibly, those at the bed-side

will say it on the dying person's behalf. And at the open grave, it is the priest who says it once more on the authority of the Church, praying for eternal life in blessedness for the deceased whose body is let down into the earth to slumber till the resurrection.

The "Our Father" is the principal prayer of Christians; for God himself gave it to us through Jesus Christ. Prayer that has not a breath of the "Our Father" in it is no Christian prayer. And if you would learn to pray, you must learn from the "Our Father." It is a prayer of petition; but in asking you surrender yourself to God. And so do you worship, and so do you give thanks, and so do you confess your sins.

The Holy Spirit is in it, crying "Abba, Father" with inexpressible fervor. The child of God prays in it, lives in it.

Pray this prayer with the whole Church in the morning, pray it with the whole of Christendom in the evening. Try to pray it always with particular fervor, never only as a matter of habit, therefore not too frequently.

JOSEPH GÜLDEN

1. FAMILY SANCTIFICATION

It was a fine old home custom, and for centuries it exercised infinite power, breaking down and effacing all motives of strife in human hearts, and keeping peace like a good spirit with God's blessing on it, building up homes for the children: whoever came last to bed, man or wife, would say the "Our Father" aloud for the other to hear, and sleep was deep indeed if the other did not wake and pray too with fervor and from the bottom of the heart. And when they preached the petition, "forgive me my trespasses as I forgive them who trespass against me," and there was conflict or rather some sort of difference between man and wife, it sounded like God's voice in their hearts, and the words trembled on their lips. And when they came to the next, "And lead me not into temptation but deliver me from all evil," then whatever one held against the other sank and faded away in red-hot shame before God, and their hearts opened up, and each acknowledged his own fault, and each begged the other's pardon, and each confessed his

love and delight, and how he was only happy when he was at peace; and how the evil spirit appeared, he could not tell how, and made him see black in his mind, wallowing in the mire of anger and discontent. . . . And then how, when they came to pray, it was as though a higher power came up behind the bad spirit in his heart, and beat it soundly till it made itself scarce, and then it was as though he awoke from a spell, as though a door in him opened, as though he were out in a stormy night, looking into a lovely sunny garden, till he felt, so it must have seemed to our first parents, when from the wilderness they looked back and gazed upon their lost paradise for the last time. Then he felt powerfully drawn towards this garden, in all fear, he said, lest what befell the first parents might befall him too, when they got further and further away from it; and there was no peace anywhere except back inside it, and this sunny garden was their own peace and good understanding; if he could gain the whole world, he would not exchange it for this garden of peace. And thus their happiness returned and bloomed afresh, and in joyful humility each acknowledged his own fault and begged for pardon and promised right courteously to make war upon this bad spirit that was not to be got rid of but kept on coming back. And in sweet peace they fell asleep, and when the first streak of dawn touched the sky, they awoke with new heart in them.

God had blessed them with children, and heartfelt joy was theirs on this account. But the hand of the Lord came over them and one after another he took the fairest and dearest of them, till it seemed none would remain to them and they would be left alone in the world. It was hard for them to pull through, and a long, long time went by before they could say outright, "the Lord has given, the Lord has taken away, praised be the name of the Lord!" They often tried, but grew ashamed and were silent, for they felt that what the heart said was something quite else, and they well knew what God made of such double-dealing between heart and lips. But they bore with one another, and when at nightfall they prayed together, and one began, "Our Father," the voice came to a standstill and he wept, and the other wept too with him, and for a long while neither could pray again. But they did not give up till one had managed it, and if each petition brought new weeping, and behind each stood the lost children, the kingdom and the will and the bread and everything came as a reminder to them, and when they got to the trespasses, they grew fearful whether

they had come short in some way, whether they had not wronged them. Could they but fight their way through, could they but master it all and reach the end, like wayfarers among rocks and gulleys, could they but pray together, "For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory"—then a quietness descended on them, the waves of pain grew milder. They could think of the children in God's glory, with their grandmother, could think of the time when they, too, awakened by the Father's might, would be with them in the Father's kingdom for all eternity.

[Through a misfortune the couple lost a considerable part of their wealth, and from that time on, Christian, the farmer, looked sourly upon the generous alms his wife distributed. Then all too frequently harsh words fell in front of the children and before the servants, till a fresh incident parted the parents entirely. Neither had a word for the other. And the bed-time "Our Father" ceased, too. Each went his own way, apart from the other.

[One Sunday, coming home from church, walking through the countryside, Annie saw how resplendent it was with God's blessing, from the valley to the crests of the foothills . . . and her heart stood still as she beheld the harmony of heaven and earth, and how everything was so beautiful and so glorious and so wonderful to look at, because there was peace between heaven and earth. . . .

[And then it was properly clear to Annie how she was wrong to have stopped praying, and how from that moment grudging and grief had rooted in her mind and kept something permanently there that otherwise vanished each evening. It was not that she had not prayed, but her prayer had found no echo in Christian's soul, had no longer smoothed out all obstacles, indeed it had risen to God less and less, had left her soul in the darkness of its misery, and increasingly it had only been words that rolled over her tongue, like stones rolling in the riverbed. . . .

[An immense humility came over her, she saw how low she had come, no punishment seemed to her great enough, and she did not pray not to be punished, but felt an inner desire to be punished, a joyful readiness to bear punishment. . . .

[In the evening she did her rounds twice over, for her heart beat so hard again, and she approached her small bedroom as the layman approaches the sanctuary in church, where only the

priest goes. In silence she prepared for bed as usual, in silence she went to her usual corner. She sat there a long while and tried to pray as she used to do, but her chest grew tighter and tighter. Not a word could she utter. Should she not wait till to-morrow? But the parish priest said it might happen to a housewife to die while the food was still cooking on the fire, and whoever hoped for a corner in heaven should not leave discord on earth.]

Again she struggled to speak, and the sweat stood out on her brow in bright drops. Her soul turned Godwards with inexpressible groanings: Father, hast thou forsaken me?

Then it was as though a dark confusion fell away that had stood over her soul, threatening it, as though chains burst asunder that were wound round her throat. The words on her lips were released, and slowly, tremblingly, but fervently and distinctly she began to pray: Our Father. At the sound of Annie's voice, Christian started as though the fire-bell had rung; then he sat up, then sounds tore from his throat, he was praying too, and when Annie got to the petition, Father, forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us, and was overcome with weeping so that her voice was but a sob, he wept too and weeping prayed the prayer to the end. And it seemed to them as though the prayer was sunshine, and a dark fog had been about them till one could no longer see the face of the other. And now the sun rose over the fog and its rays broke into it and divided it and it was torn apart as though God's own hand reached down from heaven and up it rose, and all was light and bright around them and their hearts lay open to one another.

JEREMIAS GOTTHELF

[A young Australian, Andrew Verschengelder, was on his way to Italy. It was in 1778. He came to the Tyrol and there he spent a day and a night in a more than stately homestead, to give his horse a rest. The day went past all too quickly in merry candid dallying with Romana, the farmer's daughter. The night found him restless, wakeful, with senses alert, and he went wandering through the house. He came to the door of the farm-pair's bedroom, and without meaning to eavesdrop he remained there and overheard their conversation.]

Those two inside were as intimately and warmly together as a

newly-married couple. Suddenly it was as though a drop of cold water struck his heart in the middle. They were speaking of him and the girl, but quite candidly. Whatever the child did, said the woman, she let her be, for she knew she would never be up to anything behind her back. She was far too open a nature for that, she got it from him, for he had always been a warm-hearted, friendly soul with his happy disposition, and now through God's goodness the child was to be the same.—No, said the man, she got it from her, being child of such a mother there could be nothing deceitful or secretive about her.—But it was an old woman she was becoming, with her daughter already running after a stranger; he should be ashamed of himself, behaving to her like a lover still.—No, God be witness, for him she had always been the same, in fact more and more dear, and not a single hour of regret had he known these eighteen years.—Nor had she, not a single hour. She was his and the children's, all in one,—the ones here and the others (who had died). And those two old folk the stream carried away in the April floods must be reckoned happy. They swept past in their bed, holding hands, and went under a whirlpool, and her white hair shone like silver under the willows. That is what God gave those he had chosen; beyond all hoping and praying.

Then there was silence in the room; a quiet turning over in the beds gave him the impression they were kissing. He wanted to go away and did not dare, there was such silence. It weighed heavily on his mind that nothing like this occurred between his own parents, none of that lovely intimacy, although each was proud of the other and they faced all the world shoulder to shoulder, each sensitive to the other's honor and careful about it all the time. He could not make out what it was that his own parents lacked; and then the two within started to pray the "Our Father" together. Andrew slipped away.

HUGO VON HOFMANNSTHAL

I was born in Franken, in a little village on the river Main, and the first thing I remember distinctly is how my mother taught me to pray the "Our Father" and "Hail Mary." I stood before her with folded hands and watched her lips, and saw how she said it, and repeated it childishly after her and felt very good, as a child before God does. I did it always in the early morning and knelt down for it at my cot-side in the evening, at bed time.

CLEMENS BRENTANO

As a child Carl Muth was accustomed to say "Our Father" before going to sleep, not only for himself but for all whom he was fond of, or who were ill or in need, once for each, and once for no one in particular. That one he gave God free for someone only He knew about, whom the little boy he then was did not know; he called it the "odd-man-out" prayer. The story is worth recalling for its delightful revelation of a child's soul, so consonant with the attraction this lovable and deeply religious man exercised on all and sundry in later life.

Anna, aged five, was waiting for her mother to say her bedtime prayers with her. But Mother was too busy at the moment and sent the child to her father: Go to Father, he will say prayers with you today. Anna looked at her mother with big brown eyes full of amazement; "But Father can't pray!" she said. The father looked up, horrified. His face went deep red as his eyes met those of his good, pious wife. Then he took his child on his knees, drew her to him tenderly and said: "Sweetheart, Grannie taught me to pray too, and you shall see that I can still do it."

Then he said "Our Father" with his child, and made a silent vow that the children should never again find it possible to think their father could not pray.

NEUWERK CALENDAR

[When, after many years of marriage, Kristin's husband, Erlend, left her on account of a disagreement and a quarrel, she yearned for her father far more than in the days when she was happy. He had gone home forever, and she longed for the counsel he had always given her, in his wise and kindly fashion. Had she been able to, she would have called him out of eternity. Then the priest to whom she told these things reminded her that her father, Lavrans, had constantly given her advice, and had always loved and respected her, so that she only had to follow his example in life to be in receipt of his counsel and act in his spirit. To this reminder the priest added a story from his own memory:]

The first time I saw you, Kristin, you were a tender little maid—Lavrans took you between his knees, folded your little hands over your breast and told you to recite a Paternoster to me—and you were able to say it clearly and beautifully, though you did not

understand a word of it—; later you learned the meaning of each petition in our own tongue—maybe you have forgotten that by now.

SIGRID UNSET

Trust in God's fatherly goodness unites those praying in one family of brothers, and each individual leaves his own wishes aside and only expresses those that he shares with all the rest as a member of this family. Our Father, our bread, our trespasses, our debtors, our temptation. The "I" is silent, seeking nothing for itself, praying "we" in the name of all brothers, for the common tasks and needs of all citizens of God's kingdom, all children of the Father. The Lord's Prayer is the common prayer for the Father's children, it is a prayer of people who know they are one in the fellowship of God the Father.

JOSEPH MARIA NIELEN

2. CHILD-LIKE SIMPLICITY, AND THE BRINK OF SUPERSTITION

To boil an egg soft, put it into boiling water for the length of an "Our Father"; to boil it hard, say two "Our Father's". . . .

He who prays seven "Our Fathers" at the beginning of the year will live the year through. . . .

New-born children should have an "Our Father" prayed into their mouths immediately after birth, then the child will be good and biddable. . . .

Praying the "Our Father" is protection against thunderstorms. . . .

Praying the "Our Father" over a field of wheat keeps hail off the harvest. . . .

In sickness, praying "Our Father" nine times has great virtue in restoring health. . . .

With seventy-seven "Our Fathers" every illness can be prayed back to health. . . .

"Our Father" written on an amulet is a protection against gout. . . .

The "Our Father" is a protection against evil spirits; praying the "Our Father" can drive them off. . . .

The "Our Father" written in a circle round anyone protects him from demons. . . .

An "Our Father" said backwards undoes an evil spell. . . .

The praying of a certain number of "Our Fathers" can deliver a soul from purgatory. . . .

The trader's "Our Father"

*Our Father/who art in heaven/*meanwhile he is thinking, Egidi-Market will soon be here/*Hallowed be thy name/*where shall I find a lodging, now my old landlord has died/*thy kingdom come/*God console him/*how often we drank ourselves drunk—most swinishly /thy will be done/on earth/*the Blue Cow Inn is said to be not half bad/*as it is in heaven/*it is worth trying anyhow/*give us this day our daily bread/*if I could only place those two pieces of old brocade/*and forgive us our trespasses/*they'd do for vestments all right/*as we forgive them that trespass against us/*it's out of fashion for the women/*lead us not into temptation/*for our Lord it's good enough/*but deliver us from all evil/*the priest's long at it today/*Amen/*what does it matter, they'll keep dinner for me.

ABRAHAM A SANCTA CLARA

Once upon a time, a boy was brought to St. Regulus who was possessed of an evil spirit and most violently plagued by it. The holy man did nothing but pray over the boy with great devotion, saying the "Our Father" and the Christian Creed. And behold, the evil spirit immediately flew out of the boy in the form of a bat and left him.

3. GRACE BEFORE AND AFTER MEALS IN THE SPIRIT OF THE "OUR FATHER"

Grace

Our very eyes can see how God
Has filled his kindly hand for all
And how he decks his table for
His creatures great and small.

Indeed he does, and He alone!
But man helps too, and should
Be busy and not waste his time;
So is it right and good.

FROM MATTHIAS CLAUDIUS

Goodly Giver, thanks be thine!
 Givest life, and so we live!
 Makest bread and milk and wine!
 Who could have no thanks to give?

Every dew-drop hallows thee,
 Father. Through thy loving care
 Bread is on our board, and we
 Are fed and glad and debonair.

Let us take the gifts our Father
 Now has ready for us here,
 Heartily, as brothers rather
 Giving thanks, and make good cheer.

FROM JOHANN MICHAEL SAILER

Lord Jesus Christ, bend down this day
 And bless the table where we sit;
 Grant us food of heaven, may
 Our souls be sure and welcome it.

FROM A. REUSNER, SONG BOOK, 1596

Speys Gott, tränk Gott	May God give food
Alli arme Chind,	May God give drink
Di uf Ärde sind. Ame.	To all poor children
	That are on earth. Amen.

SWISS CHILD'S GRACE

Thou Maker and Provider
 Of all we have and need,
 God, Father, we thy children
 Pray thee for daily bread.

O be among us now,
 Dearly beloved guest,
 Lord Jesu, here below
 Linger and take thy rest.

Thy blessed peace preserve—
 Thy word light up our hearts.
 Grant that thy gifts may serve
 To draw us heavenwards.

O God, bless our food,
Contented may we be,
On bad days and on good
Constant in praising thee.

FROM STRASBURG HYMN BOOK, 1537

I know thou art the fount of grace
And its eternal spring,
Pouring upon us all our days
That saving goodly thing.

FROM PAUL GERHARDT

Lord, before we eat,
Let us not forget
Thee, our living Bread.
Food for our mortality
And food for all eternity
Grant us in our need.
Help us after earth to come
As welcome guests in heaven's home.

FROM BADEN HYMN BOOK

Thanksgiving

Thou gavest what we ate and drank,
Father most bountiful and good.
In peace, with grateful hearts, we thank
For these thy gifts, for this thy food.

Creator! What thy hand did make
Thou dost preserve with might, and bless;
Sending us, for Jesus' sake,
Things for use and things to please.

Thankfully we raise our heart
To thee, now hale and whole again,
Daily rejoicing that thou art,
So long as breath in us remain.

FROM S. M. SAILER

Father, God, we praise thee now
And thank thee for the benefit
Of food and drink thou dost bestow
To keep our bodies strong and fit.

We pray thee, Father, kind and good,
That our souls, too, may be fed,
And Christ be our heavenly food
Who is truly Man and God.

FROM HERMAN WEPSE

We give thee thanks, our Lord and God,
For body's bread and soul's bread,
For sun and rain and leaf and grass
For all else thou hast given us.

May thy blessing still descend,
Ever open be thy hand.
Feed us through this present year,
Keep from us fire, hail and war.

Grant we may be thankful still,
Give us grace to do thy will
And come through Christ to live with thee
In thy kingdom evermore. Amen.

FROM ANDREAS PANKRATEUS

4. "OUR FATHER" AS HOUSE BLESSING

Our Father, bless this home.
Thy name be hallowed in it;
Let thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done each minute.

Give us our daily bread:
Sufficiency of food and drink,
A roof above our head.
Be in all we do, say, think.

From sin make us free,
That we may not die, blind,
But be full of life, and see;
Be peaceful, helpful, kind.

Make us ready to forgive.
Keep the evil one at bay.
God, our Father, come and live
At home with us today.

AFTER GEORGE THURMAIR

5. THE "OUR FATHER" FOR GUESTS AND FOR JOURNEYS

Whenever you have to go on a journey, wherever it may be, make the sign of the cross in the name of Christ, devoutly say the Creed and the Lord's Prayer, and then set out confidently on your way.

CAESARIUS OF ARLES

In 1811, two young German artists were travelling through the Tyrol to Rome; one of the two was Peter Cornelius. They spent a night at a farmhouse, and were witnesses of how the family and household said evening prayers. They both behaved as though it were nothing to do with them. But at the end they heard the farmer pray one more "Our Father," "that God would have mercy on the souls of the two young guests and convert them."

6. THE "OUR FATHER" AS MIRROR OF CONSCIENCE

Prayer before a general examination of conscience

God and Father, I kneel in thy holy presence. Grant me to see thy image in the Lord's Prayer. Let me hear all that the petitions of the "Our Father" have to say to me, so that I may recognize thee.

Let me recognize myself in the light of thy truth and in the mirror which thy Son has given me.

Let me have insight into the way I have lived. May the contemplation of thy glory arouse in me a great desire to be more like thee. Let me recognize how I have lived among my brothers and fellows. The demands of thy love shall be the measure of all my deeds and neglects.

With the assistance of thy Holy Spirit, help thou me to recollect myself sincerely and soberly, and turn to thee and thy love anew, in true contrition of heart, and take courage for the next lap of my journey, and may the road end one day in eternal life with thee.

Our

Our basic attitude to our neighbor:

Have I treated my neighbor, God's child, with proper respect?

Have I respected his life, his freedom, his individuality, his innocence, his honor?

Have I carried out the duties that justice and neighborly love impose on me, treating as my brother anyone in need? (With a ready hand? With kindness? Friendliness?)

What was my attitude to those nearest to me (unselfish, obliging, sympathetic)?

Have I myself been capable of accepting love, and been worthy of it?

Father

Our basic attitude to God the Father:

1) Is God Father to me? Beyond fate, need, war, flight, ejection, hunger, unemployment? And am I really a son—a daughter—to him? Or has he become a stranger to me? How did it happen? (Indifference? Bitterness? Spite?)

2) My attitude to the Father: Reverence? Obedience? Trust and faith? Love? Gratitude? Patience under punishment?

3) Does it make me happy to know God has adopted me?

4) For holders of authority in state, family, parish, school, work: Have I founded my authority on power and force, or on fatherly love?

Hallowed be thy name

1) Is God the "holy One" for me, inviolable, the Lord whom I worship in deep humility?

2) Have I done anything to hallow his name, like a child intent on his father's honor? Was what I thought and said about God reverent and worthy of him? Was I, too, distressed when he, or his Son, the Church, or anything holy, was slandered or blasphemed? Have I defended God's cause whenever defense was possible, or was I too cowardly? Was my behavior disgraceful and dishonorable to God, so that I was a cause of scandal?

3) Have I got the right idea of God (God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and our Father)? Is my idea of Christ alive? Have I taken trouble to deepen my religious life? Have I complained against God?

4) God's honor and God's praise: Have I sought God's honor above all things? Have I let myself be put at a disadvantage for the sake of God's honor? Have I defended the honor of Christ and the Church? Have I saved a quiet hour for prayer when it was most needed, to be near the Father? How do I pray? Have I taken the trouble to share in praising God in the parish, or do I leave it all to the priest? (attitude towards the liturgy, taking part in Sunday Mass, etc.)

Thy kingdom come

1) Am I expecting the coming kingdom, the day of Christ, the advent of his reign? or does this world keep me from remembering the future one and taking it seriously?

2) Have I done anything to help the coming of God's kingdom in this world? Prayed for it? Made sacrifices for it? Worked for it? Have I troubled about the *reflection of the coming kingdom here below*: about justice here on earth, about freedom, about glory as the reign of goodness? Was there any evidence in me of the abundance of divine power in its coming glory? Could God's kingdom grow in me? Or what was the obstacle?

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven

1) Is the will of God my first concern? Was I self-willed?

2) Had I a quick ear when the Father appealed to me through my fellow men? Was I on the alert and ready to do good?

3) Have I specially observed the main commandment of God, the double commandment of love? Was I lacking in charity in thought, in word, in deed?

4) How have I carried out God's will in my daily profession? Have I seen and done my day's work as a charge given me by the Father? (in regard to punctuality, good-temper, reliability, quality of work.)

5) How have I carried out the will of God in difficult times? Did I say *fiat: be it done according to thy word?*

Give us this day our daily bread

1) Have I prayed to the Father for daily things? Or was I too proud to ask? Was there a sullen, unfriendly silence between him and me?

2) Do I trust him to the extent of only praying for today and leaving the future to God? Do I worry about the future and about daily things? Have I the right sense of proportion, the sense to be pleased with the simple yet precious gifts of daily bread?

3) Have I been content with my daily bread, without taking advantage of other people? without cheating?

4) Have I thanked God for daily things too?

5) Have I taken care that my soul, too, has its daily bread? Have I troubled about the bread of God's word? (readings in church, sermons, private reading of holy scripture and religious books.) Have I regularly and thankfully received the sacramental Bread? Have I taken pains that those entrusted to my care should be given good matter for their further religious development?

And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us

1) Have I taken trouble to recognize my guilt? Do I admit my guilt to myself? Or am I too proud?

2) Have I confessed my guilt to the Father and asked for his forgiveness? Or do I fail to bring my guilt into relation with God at all?

3) Have I gladly forgiven those who offended me? Am I incapable of reconciliation?

Lead us not into temptation

1) Do I know my own weaknesses? Or have I the temerity to play with temptation?

2) Do I restrain temptation in myself: wrongful desires?

3) How do I conquer the temptation of need, poverty, injustice etc. in the world? Can I will the cross? How do I cope with the temptation of the great power of evil in the world? With the support of patience? In expectation of coming judgment? Do I avoid, do I flee by every possible means the great danger of growing hardened?

But deliver us from evil

1) Do I demand of God that he spare me all trials?

2) Have I given way to depression or to groundless melancholy or moodiness?

3) Am I open to God's consolation and also to the consolation of his things and his world?

4) Do I harvest the inner fruits of suffering, the gift of greater nearness to God (through bearing the cross)?

5) Do I seek the meaning of suffering in our faith? Do I try to turn it into "good" suffering? Am I ready to make sacrifices?

6) Do I await final redemption in hope of the day of Christ's glory?

JOSEPH GÜLDEN

7. IN TIMES OF STRESS

St. Francis, when he was recovering from a serious illness, began to perform the works of neighborly love with great application. In his striving for evangelical perfection he went so far in this practice that he gave all he possessed to the poor. His father was displeased and brought him before the Bishop of Assisi, to make him renounce his claim to his father's property in the bishop's presence. Whereupon Francis took off his clothing, gave it all to his father, and stated moreover that he had at his disposal greater wealth when he said, Our Father, who art in heaven.

FROM THE BREVIARY, OCTOBER 4TH

The "Our Father" can be prayed at all times and in all circumstances, even the worst. Such is its spiritual force, it soars above all confusion in the life of individuals and nations, and whoever lets himself be penetrated by its spirit is raised above confusion for as long as he can keep it up.

BERNARD MARTIN

[Erlend, son of Nicholas, had left Kristin and the couple lived apart. The man was living on a remote farmstead when Kristin gave birth to his youngest son. He did not come back, though messengers were sent to him. The child grew sickly. Kristin prayed ardently for his recovery. With St. Olav and the Blessed Virgin she wrestled for the child's life.]

Almighty God, Queen of Mercy, St. Olav,—she felt herself, this time there was nothing to be done, despite all her exertions and prayers for the child's life.—Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them who trespass against us.

Every Feast Day she went to church as she was accustomed to do. She kissed the doorposts, sprinkled herself with holy water, bowed low before the old crucifix over the choir arch. The Redeemer looked down, sorrowful and gentle in his death agony. Christ died for the redemption of his murderers. St. Olav stood in unceasing supplication before him, on behalf of those who had driven him into exile and killed him.—As we forgive them that trespass against us.

Sweet Mary, my child is dying!—Do you know, Kristin, I had rather borne my Son's cross and suffered his death than have stood under his cross to see him die. But as I knew this had to happen for the redemption of sinners, I consented to it in my heart—and I consented when my Son asked: Father, forgive them, for they know not what they are doing.—As we forgive them who trespass against us.

What you cry out in your heart will not be prayer till you have prayed your "Our Father" quite purely.—Forgive us our trespasses.

Do you recall how many times your trespass was forgiven? . . . —In her innermost heart she did not feel she had forgiven Erlend. She could not because she did not want to. She held the cup of her love in her hands, she still did not want to let go of it, although it contained but the last bitter dregs. She tried to pray: St. Olav, help me, perform a miracle in my mind so that I can say my prayer with-

out untruth—can think of Erlend with God-fearing quietness in my soul. But she knew she did not really wish this prayer to be heard. Then she felt herself that it was of no avail when she prayed to be allowed to keep her child. Her little Erlend was a blessing lent by God—she could keep him only on one condition, and this condition she did not accept. And it was hopeless to try to deceive St. Olav.

SIGRID UNDSET

The third of February was a fateful day for Berlin. British and American planes made a major attack on the city and hurled their loads of bombs, wave after wave, upon houses and people. The atmosphere was shaken by countless crashes of thunder and the earth trembled as though in her death agony. We sat crouched in a cellar air-raid shelter, some hundred of us, squashed together like a hecatomb of sacrificial victims doomed to be slaughtered! The minutes dripped past with agonizing slowness, filling the deadly tense hour to the brim. Each of us harkened intently to the nerve-wracking shattering din in the sky, and longed for the end. The end might mean the end of the attack, the end of a hideous hour, sixty hideous minutes with sixty hideous seconds apiece, or end of the whole war, end of earthly existence and end of all this. The sunset of the world with foundations shuddering, falling walls and masses of masonry collapsing. . . . I glanced at my watch. Fifty minutes had gone by. That drumming din above us had ceased, the danger was apparently over for today, as far as our part of the city was concerned. My neighbor took off his steel helmet and wiped his hot forehead with relief: "In ten minutes we'll be able to breathe again." At that moment we felt an explosion that shook our house down to its foundations, rocking us as though we were on swings. A bomb must have fallen quite close, the last of this miserable day. Impatiently we waited for the "all clear"; then we flung ourselves out of doors and a few minutes later I reached the spot of the disaster.

Here, in front of the ruins of a house, I met the man I want to tell you about. I will call him Joseph Strong, for present purposes. Joseph, because like Christ's foster father he was a God-fearing man, and Strong, because in that hour when catastrophe broke over him he gave an example of exceptional strength of soul. He met me with the disconcerted, tearless look of a man who, powerless to grasp what has happened, hovers between consciousness and

dream. Like a man awaking from a heavy torpor and seeing the things of the world as though through a misty veil, without being able to take them in. Under the ruins lay his good wife, the loyal companion of a lifetime, and three of his daughters, up till now all radiantly healthy in mind and body, the apple of their father's eye. And oh, Peter, too, the little latecomer, sunshine of the family, the child of his parents' hearts. And then Annemarie, the sixth victim of the catastrophe, the only one saved alive: as I came up the whimpering child was carried past her father on a stretcher.

Without a word I put my arm around Joseph Strong's shoulder and led him into his brother-in-law's house, near by. He was trembling all over; he could hardly keep himself from crying out aloud. Then at last the tears came flowing. Thank God, he could weep. There are certain hours when a man runs the risk of losing either his heart or his reason, but for the tears that release the cramp on the soul and loosen the numbness of suffering. Leaning against the doorpost, his head bowed into the crook of his arms, we saw Joseph Strong shed the hottest and bitterest tears of his life, and could do no more than let him be and weep with him.

Up till now, Joseph Strong had not behaved otherwise than was to be expected of human nature when it is overwhelmed with a superabundance of suffering. What came next was a spectacle for angels and men. He straightened up, dried his moist eyes and said: "Friends, forgive me if I let myself go. We are no heathen after all; we believe in a merciful Father in heaven. Let us pray to him." Then, quite composed and with a steady voice, he said the "Our Father," the Lord's Prayer, which contains all that man with his stuttering tongue is capable of saying to his God, whether in days of quietness, or at those times when man seeks a form for the immensity of his joy or the utter depths of his pain.

Well, friends, I have tried again and again to understand the Lord's Prayer. I have read what others have said and written about it and have meditated on it myself, have analyzed it and scrutinized it, phrase by phrase and word for word, without ever exhausting the depths of its seven phrases, those "seven pillars which wisdom took to build her house" (Cf. Prov. 9:6). I know that one can spend a whole night meditatively praying a single "Our Father," and when morning dawns the Amen has not yet been said. Indeed one may not have got beyond that first, blessed word "Father." For many years, in all possible variations I have preached on nothing other than this one initial word we have to think of and have to say

when we fold our hands to pray. And when, one day, I come to my end, may the Lord God give me grace to say this word once more, with the whole fervor of which I am capable. Then I will close my eyes, full of trust and without fear, as a child sure of its father's love. For I know that this word is the key to God's heart and the doors of his heaven. But I know this, too: If one wants to pray the "Our Father" as Joseph Strong did in the hour of his trial, then one must be quite near to dear God, as near as one only is after a specially great sacrifice. Then God himself takes one in his arms and dries one's tears. Salt-bitter, precious tears.

At the beginning we prayed aloud with him. But at the third petition we fell silent. We felt that it was Joseph Strong's prayer. His prayer and his sacrifice alone. And all the rest must be quiet. And his voice was firm and unhesitating over the decisive words—words that have to be said each time when a man tears his heart out of him to lay it on the altar of sacrifice: "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven."

That was the most difficult: Thy will be done. Four little words, the shortest of all prayers. When they do not come from the heart, they trip lightly over the tongue like wind stirring dry leaves. But to pray them in a Gethsemane-hour, in utter self-surrender, can in given circumstances cost sweat like drops of blood. To Joseph Strong they cost no less than five dear human lives, for each of which, had he been able to, he would gladly have given his own.

From that hour on, there came a holy peace over Joseph Strong. It never left him. Not even when the coffin with the crushed remains of his dear ones was sunk into the earth. We saw how his lips moved but we did not see him weep again. God had laid his arm about him, he lay safely and securely on God's heart.

8. THE LAST THINGS

As St. Hugo lay dying, he was asked what prayers should be said when his last hour came; he answered in a low voice: Our Father, Our Father!

LEGENDARY TRADITION

How three "Our Fathers" should be said, with special fervor and concentration, maybe with outstretched hands, *for the dying*, especially when they are breathing their last.

To the first:

Lord, King Jesus Christ, above all lords and kings, calling to mind the great dread and sorrow that befell thee in Gethsemane, when thy holy sweat of blood ran from thy tender body to the ground. Through this suffering I, unworthy that I am, on behalf of this dying man, beg thee, in his dire need, to impart and grant to him the rich outpouring of thy holy sweat of blood, which, of thy loving-kindness, in agonizing dread of thy present and coming passion and death, thou didst shed for all sinners. Entreating thee to offer up the merits of this shedding of blood to thy heavenly Father, in sacrifice for all the dread, pain and suffering which this sick and dying man ever incurred or caused through his sins.

To the second:

Lord Jesus Christ, sole and sure consolation of sinners, who chose to die on the shaft of the holy cross for us and all sinners, in extreme dread, distress and destitution. I pray thee by all thy inward suffering and by the bitterness of thy martyrdom which thou didst suffer and endure on our behalf, especially when thy blessed soul parted from thy holy body. Entreating thee to offer it all in sacrifice to thy holy Father for all the suffering, dread and pain which this sick man ever incurred through his sins.

To the third:

Lord Jesus Christ, merciful Savior of the whole of mankind. I pray thee through the rapture of thy love, which drew thee down from high heaven to earth and plunged thee in the deep sea of bitter and manifold suffering. Entreating thee to make this poor sick man worthy of salvation, and after this present grievous existence, to open to him the door of everlasting life in gladness. Who livest and reignest forever and ever. Amen.

PETER CANISIUS

When I can say no word more and a petition of the "Our Father" comes into my mind, it is as though Christ straightened out the wings of my spirit and as though the whole "Our Father" was expressly and specially made for my circumstances.

Our Father! to the sick and the healthy, the dying and the living, thou art Father.

In heaven thou art the light of the saints, on earth the assurance of those who fight. Thy name be glorified in this illness too! whether its course end in death or recovery: thy name alone be illumined through it. May whoever sees me suffering praise thy goodness; for it gives me strength to endure. And when they carry my body out of the house and bring it to my grave, may thy name be praised, for thou dost take my spirit to thee and givest the dust back to the earth.

Thy kingdom come! Thou alone dost make an end of the war between spirit and flesh, forever—when thou dost release the soul from the bonds of the body; for a while, when with divine fighting forces thou dost salve the weary warrior. O salve him!

Thy will be done! Not mine, for it is earthly, it is time-bound. Thine be done, for it is eternal, holy as thou art. Give me today the bread of life, give me heavenly drink, that my spirit may not languish in the land of need and drought. Forgive me the sins of impatience and all the fruits of selfishness. Forgive me all my trespasses and grant me a forgiving heart; then I say boldly: forgive, as I forgive. Let my heart rest in thy heart, then no temptation shall come near me or else, at one with thee, I shall strike it down with thy strong arm.

And then the last petition: deliver me from me, from all wickedness, from all evil. Amen.

JOHANN MICHAEL SAILER

[As the plague raged throughout the land, Kristin, Lavrans' daughter, did works of Christian mercy. She was tireless in caring for the sick. Drawing on her last store of energy, with the help of her true friend, Ulf Haldorsson, she buried the body of one of the plague victims in consecrated ground. This was the cause of her own death. She had worked hard making a bier out of boards, and had placed the dead woman's body on it. Then Ulf told her: Now, I think the time has come when you should say some prayers.]

Numb and weak as she was, she began to speak: *Pater noster, qui es in caelis. Adveniat regnum tuum. Fiat voluntas tua sicut in caelo et in terra*—then she paused.

Ulf looked at her. Then she went on:

Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie—rapidly and in a firm voice she said the “Our Father” to the end, and went up and made the sign of the cross over the bundle. . . .

SIGRID UNDSSET

After a short little address the priest began the prayers for the sick [at the dying farmer’s bedside]. It was an old habit of his to extemporize, praying as his fervid imagination moved him to. . . . His words were sumptuous and picturesque. He conjured up a vision of the heavenly Jerusalem waiting for the old man after his present humble state was over, with harp music like wind in the trees, with angels at play, and magnificent pastimes proceeding in all its chambers. He spoke of the insight the blessed enjoyed up yonder, high above all the ruminations and hatchings of earthly philosophy. And there dwelt poetry, not the sort that is written or dreamed, no, but true poetry, entrancing men’s minds from one morning to another. “Father!” said the old man entreatingly, with roving unhappy eyes, “Father, say a German prayer for me.” Johannes stood stiff as a pillar. “Something I understand . . . , an ‘Our Father!’” And as the young priest still stood there rigid and speechless, the sick man made a big sign of the cross and began in a wavering voice: “Our Father, who art in heaven . . . , who art . . .” he repeated persuasively, invitingly . . . “who art in heaven!” The poor priest saw blue and green. “Who art in heaven . . .” said the man, more urgently and beseechingly, and his eyes burned like a very great desert burns in thirst of the one and only oasis-spring within reach. That did it. That great thirst pierced the priest through to his very soul. So helpless with all his pomp, a regular pauper and shabby braggart he appeared to himself all of a sudden, beside this holy supra-earthly thirst of the old man. Our Father, indeed yes, only the “Our Father” could help here. Humbly he folded his hands, and while his eyes quietly, so quietly, filled with tears, he prayed the ancient, irresistible prayer, the one God himself invented; more and more strongly he prayed, but at every little phrase he waited till the sick man could whisper it after him. And behold, the sick man’s face was lit up like a feast day. His mouth and eyes looked refreshed. He was at the oasis drawing living water. What came before was only a mirage. “Thank you very much,” he said, and closed his eyes, happy at last.

FEDERER

In a Berlin street a tramp was run over by a car. A cop made a note of the car number; the victim was to be taken away to hospital, but screamed for pain when he was touched. A doctor came and signified to the onlookers that the man was beyond help, it was only a matter of minutes. The poor fellow groaned, tried to say something, but only uttered inarticulate sounds. Then a girl pushed through the crowd, half a child still; she rested his head on her arm and said: "I will help you, say it after me as best you can." And she began: "Our Father, who art . . ." The man stared at her in surprise, then a smile seemed to flit across his face, and he babbled the words after her: "... hallowed . . .". The doctor took his hat off and the onlookers did the same. A half-grown lad stopped trying to be funny at the man's expense and pulled off his cap too. Quietly and clearly the girl's words sounded through the silence that had fallen, and babbling it as best he could, the dying man said it all through to the last word. . . .

WORKBOOK FOR GIRLS' RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

9. THE "OUR FATHER" AS THE SUBSTANCE OF ALL PRAYER

Well, we have talked a lot but said little about the Lord's Prayer. But it is perhaps a beginning all the same—a very small impulse for a beginning, which we can make new and spontaneous in prayer. Simply to listen to the Gospel is no use, of course. But if only we men and women of today would make an attempt to take ourselves as we are, to admit our despair, whether camouflaged or recognized, to descend likewise into the depths of our heart, to give up deceiving ourselves about ourselves, to have the courage to renounce inwardly all that life takes from us anyhow—everything in fact—and then suddenly, after we have given it all up to observe that we possess everything, that he is wholly with us, the silent One, the nameless, incomprehensible One, who is All, and to observe in the loneliness of our rubble-covered heart that this poor heart carries eternity in it, and then to begin to say quietly: Our Father, who art in the heaven of my heart, even when it appears to be a hell; hallowed be thy name, may it be called upon in the deathly quiet of my speechless perplexity; thy kingdom come, when all else forsake us; thy will be done, even when it kills us, because it is life, and what looks like a disaster on earth is in heaven the springing up of

thy life; give us this day our daily bread, and let us ask for it, so that we never mistake ourselves for thee, not even in the hour when thou art near to us, but observe, from our hunger at least, that we are poor creatures of little importance; free us from our guilt, and in temptation preserve us from that guilt and temptation which is one and the same: not to believe in thee and in thy love which is beyond all understanding; but deliver us,—deliver us from ourselves, deliver us into thee, release use into thy freedom and thy life. If we began to talk to God something like that, with far fewer words, and much more heart, I believe our hearts would indeed have opened and we should have uttered words of prayer.

KARL RAHNER

CHAPTER FIVE

The Salutation and Seven Petitions of the “Our Father”



INTRODUCTION

AT PRAYER, if we follow the word-order of the Lord's Prayer, we discover a wonderful rhythm, carrying with it a sense of completeness, vital and rousing in its clear unity and form. There is nothing arbitrary or accidental, here all is focused on the intention, and the coherence is obvious. In the original language of the “Our Father,” Galilean Aramaic, it ran to a metrical form consisting of a series of five pairs of phrases, two lines to every pair of accented syllables. This form is still apparent in the Greek translation, and in our modern versions to some extent. What is striking is the way the three first phrases connect: “Hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done,” while the four following petitions are joined by a conjunction, “and” or “but.” The form points the matter, for the first three petitions relate to *God*, who is addressed with the “holy and admirable ‘thou’-form” (Guardini): “Hallowed be

thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done." The petitions of the second half of the prayer concern *man*, they speak of us: "Give us this day our daily bread; forgive us our trespasses; lead us not into temptation; deliver us from evil." They touch on the things that matter to humanity. In the petition for bread, the spotlight is on man's care for his maintenance. The petition means, more broadly, not only bread, but clothing, home, earnings, bodily health, in fact everything needed to keep our body and our physical life going. The vulnerability of the body is taken for granted and this petition thus becomes the expression of that urge to security that our care-ridden state gives rise to. Sisters of care are want and need. They envelop life in darkness, attack man inwardly, and can reach and destroy his life-nerve; merely to think of them fills people with *anxiety*, and experience of them may lead to *despair*. The petition for bread, and the faith and trust implied and expressed, get rid of those powers that threaten man's basic existence.

The petitions of the second half of the prayer place next to cares of maintenance those that touch on the spiritual life of man: *guilt*, *temptation* and *evil*. Guilt, original sin, and all that belongs to this order of ideas, is one of the great themes of humanity, as holy men, poets and thinkers of many different times and places witness. They are powers that have often been denied, sometimes in periods of low spirituality not recognized at all, not seen, not known. Here in the Lord's Prayer their presence is taken for granted, for where guilt is to be forgiven, guilt must exist. It is dealt with in general terms, but every believing, praying Christian knows that what is meant first is the harm done to our state as children of God, for it is the point of departure of all other forms of guilt. And not only averted guilt, but also man's vulnerability, temptation, evil, death, have their roots here. When the petitions beg for forgiveness, prevention and deliverance, they not only imply the existence of guilt and vulnerability, they also recall the beginning of the prayer to our mind. For alone to a God who is called "Father"

are these petitions appropriately addressed. In infinite love, as most illuminatingly set forth in the Father-Son relationship, he granted us redemption through the incarnation, and made the inheritance of his kingdom accessible once more, granting the possibility of fulfilling the divine will through obedience. Thus the two groups of petitions refer to one another and complete one another, forming a *unit*, just as two hemispheres form the completed sphere.

The movement of the prayer is rhythmical, a rise and a fall. Eternal and temporal interpenetrate, the one revealing the other. The first group of petitions contains a revelation of God, for it discloses God's countenance, stressing its divine power to attract and hold us entranced—pointing out its eternity, holiness, might; in the "name" it unveils God's nature as love, beauty, truth. This vision man responds to with worship and obedience, duly acknowledging the light, truth and love offered him.

And the second group continues this unveiling of God's likeness; in its picture of fallen man it shows Godhead as dread-inspiring, with a terrible majesty. This vision, too, exacts a response in the form of humble faith, remorse, forgiveness of others, vigilance, endurance and patience.

Vision and act alternate. God speaks, we respond; we speak, God responds. God discloses his immutability, we worship, sacrifice, obey, suffer. We are still and God is at work, offering himself, being merciful. Giving and taking alternate, and there ensues an "admirable exchange." In very simple terms the main features of the religious life are outlined: surrender to God, and readiness to do his will, mutually completing one another. With this multiple double-reference between earth and heaven, time and eternity, divinity and humanity, the petitions of the Lord's Prayer are links in a living, unified chain, parts of an organic whole.

Such interrelatedness gave ground to further speculation. For instance, the middle position of the bread petition induced a great deal of comment. It is the point where the movement from

above downwards—or from below upwards—hovers, poised as it were. Grouped symmetrically round this point are the third and fifth petitions, the second and sixth, and the first and seventh. In this order the opening words and the “Amen” form the extremities. The division of the prayer into two groups of petitions, three in the first, four in the second, is universal and has been in common use since the earliest days of the Fathers.

All the petitions are comprised in the number *seven*, made up of the divine *three* and the creaturely *four*. Seven is a holy number; as the sum of three and four it is a sign of the connection between divine and human things. Its cosmic significance was recognized in pre-Christian paganism, for instance in the counting of four moon phases of seven days each, and in the original number of seven planets. Babylonians, Egyptians, Persians, Indians, Chinese, Greeks and the German tribes treated seven as a holy number in their myths. Old-Testament Judaism saw in it the perfect sum of being. The seven days of the week were crowned by the Sabbath, the seventh day dedicated to God. The seventh year was chosen as a year of festival and dedication, in the seventh year the field was left fallow; seven was the holy number of the slaughtered victims of sacrifice; seven branches adorned the candlestick in the Temple, seven times a day God was to be offered the praise of prayer. Further, Babylonian epic recounts a seven-day creation myth. In Hellenistic times, Philo the Jew pointed out the significance of the number seven in the rhythm of human life. And in the New Testament there are many passages referring to seven as a number of capital significance. Especially St. John's Apocalypse, where it is the perfect number, full of mysterious implications. Finally, the middle ages were indefatigable in issuing commentaries on the holy number. In our own times it is still felt to have something special about it.

The number-symbolism and the articulation of the Lord's Prayer do not in the least disturb its unity. Rather they serve to light up its inexhaustible riches, helping the mind to grasp it

more easily. But for the living prayer the important thing is, not that it is the sum of the individual petitions, but that we see it as an organism, with the whole contained in the separate parts and each part—each petition—only to be understood in regard to the whole.

If, later on, we consider the petitions separately, we do it only in order to come to terms, practically speaking, with its vast content. The unity of this divine prayer-form must never be forgotten; in reading on, we will bear it in mind; in praying, pray it. The passages quoted were selected and ordered with this need in view. They reveal the *presence of Christ* in all the petitions, giving them coherence, reminding us once more that it was the God-Man who first composed the prayer, and showing the "Our Father" to be the Christian prayer *par excellence*. They endorse what Tertullian said (See Chap. I), that in the Lord's Prayer is contained in abridged form the whole "glad tidings" as found in the Gospels and Pauline Epistles. The epistles of St. Paul prove through numerous echoes of word or content that the Apostle knew the Lord's Prayer and prayed the various petitions in his suffering and endeavors to spread Jesus' teaching.

Moreover, Tertullian's statement will find further endorsement in the passages from Holy Scripture given as page headings.

How attractively Divine Wisdom has ordered the sequence of the prayer! After the heavenly things: the name of God, the will of God, the kingdom of God, room is left for petitions for earthly needs.

TERTULLIAN

Three petitions point to heaven, four to this life.

JEROME

In St. Matthew the Evangelist, this prayer has seven petitions, of which three pray for what is eternal, but the other four for what is temporal but nonetheless necessary for attaining to the eternal.

For we say: "Hallowed be thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," which is valid for all times; and although it starts from here on earth, it grows in step with our inner progress, and on its completion, which we may expect in the other life, it passes into our permanent possession. But when we say: "Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil," who could not perceive that this refers to the wretchedness of this present life? In yonder eternal life where we hope one day to be forever, the hallowing of God's name, his kingdom and his will, will be perfect in our spirit and in our body, and continue so without end. But daily bread is mentioned in the "Our Father" because it is necessary for soul and body here below, whether we take it spiritually or literally or both together in a double sense. And it is here below that is concerned when we beg for forgiveness of sins, for it is here below that sins are committed. And here below is concerned with temptation too, the temptations that provoke us and drive us into sin; and the evil from which we want to be delivered. For up yonder there are none of these oppressive things!

AUGUSTINE

In three petitions we beg for what is eternal, in the four following for what is temporal.

THE VENERABLE BEDE

As in the Ten Commandments, three commandments are related to God, so in this prayer-form, relative to the inner man, the three-fold God is hallowed in us. When we call him into us with our whole heart, our whole mind and our whole soul, we shall be made more holy through these three petitions. The four following ones relate to the things of our present life, but through the first three we are directed towards the grace of our future adoption.

PASCHASIUS RADBERTUS

This prayer, containing seven petitions, can be said in commemoration of the seventh day, when Christ rested in the grave. On the seventh day the apostles were in a torment of mourning and fear of the Jews. But if I am not mistaken, they prayed that they might be delivered from evil. In the Lord's resurrection they received what they prayed for. Now the Church, too, prays as on the seventh day

when the Lord had fallen asleep and rested; she stands fasting, watching, praying, fighting in love, so that hope for heavenly joys be not swept aside by the allurements of this present time.

AMALAR OF METZ

There are seven petitions, as there are seven gifts of the Spirit and seven virtues. Through the petitions we attain to the gifts, through the virtues to the beatitudes.—These petitions are divided (in two groups) according to the two ways; for the temporal way is different from the heavenly way. Through the temporal way we reach the heavenly one when as wayfarers we make good and proper use of the temporal, never becoming dependent on this world but remaining free of it. The three last petitions relate to temporal life, the three first are fulfilled in heaven; but the middle one, although it comes from the heavenly side, is fulfilled here on earth. Our spiritual bread is what we ask for, so that we can enjoy it here and be strengthened by it.

BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX

The four first petitions show us finely what good things we Christian faithful should hope for and pray for here. The first and highest is certainly the divine majesty, glory and honor; the next our blessedness, the third, the debt of obedience which we owe to God. The fourth and last, necessary sustenance for body and soul. Such, in short, is the content of the four first petitions and they are presented to us here for our hoping and desiring.

The three last petitions deal properly with evil, which we ought zealously to forestall by means of daily prayer. Evil are the sins that close God's kingdom to us and hinder us from doing good at all; evil are the temptations which, unless we are protected by God's help and God's grace, will forcibly drag us into sin; evil are the afflictions and distresses of this and the next life, in so far as they keep us from God's grace and glory.

PETER CANISIUS

The seven petitions of the "Our Father" together compose a wonderful structure, rich in blessing. None of the petitions could be subtracted without destroying the whole, no petition could be added without repeating what has already been said. The "Our Father" is so overflowing rich and so full of power that it confronts man with a task he cannot accomplish. Therefore it is wise

to give one's mind to the individual parts in recollection and peace.

BERNARD MARTIN

Through the channel of bodily needs the fourth petition aims at the higher requirements of soul and spirit too; these the three following items do not appear to touch. The petitions for life's necessities comes neither at the end nor at the beginning of the prayer but in the middle. It is not the target but the hinge of the "Our Father" which continues its swinging movement in the fifth, sixth and seventh petitions.

LEOPOLD ZIEGLER

As model of a fundamentally satisfactory prayer, the New Testament gives us the "Our Father." It corresponds wholly to Jesus' teaching on the kingdom of God, in which the first thing that is required is that man shall not place his self, his ego, his reputation, his wishes in the middle point of his thoughts and aspirations, but the holy will of God, God's sovereign rule. As in the hour when he was oppressed by his approaching passion, Jesus himself prayed to the Father that not his will, only the Father's will be done; and as Jesus prayed that God's will to save be accomplished, so Christians are bound to base their prayer not on their little earthly wishes but on God's concerns. The "Our Father" is a prayer that teaches people to look beyond themselves to God; and only when this disposition is present is access available to the communion and understanding with God to which his grace admits us.

ALFONS HEITZ

The Lord's Prayer links the heights which the saints can reach in prayer, and the depths out of which the sinner must strive to emerge. No one can ever come to us and say the "Our Father" is only for simple Christian people and no prayer for him any more. And no one can be such a beginner that he cannot find his way into it. No man ever dare leave out the humble petitions of the second half: petitions for bread for himself and others, for forgiveness of sins and deliverance from evil. And even the most sinful sinner longing for forgiveness, and the man burdened with cares and worried about his bread, are bound to raise their minds and hearts to the great matters of God.

EUGEN WALTER

All the immense fleet of prayers laden with the sins of the world
All the immense fleet of prayers and penances comes to assault
me.

Each Pater is like a high timbered vessel with the head you
know,

Those words that go in front of every prayer like the hands of
a suppliant in front of his face . . .

Those three or four words which strike forward like a fine head
on a poor ship.

CHARLES PÉGUY

OUR FATHER WHO ART IN HEAVEN

The first words of the prayer are words of God to us and not words from out of ourselves. How could man, with his sordid leanings to wretchedness and sin, presume to say it, if he had not been told it beforehand? Nonetheless thousands of years were to pass before he could grasp this word "Father" in its deeper meaning and true significance, and say it accordingly, although the men of the pre-Christian Advent were not without faith or sacrifice or prayer. In the world's twilight, light broke through here and there, giving glimpses of God the Father, the most holy Trinity, the incarnation of God's Son. Forebears, kings and prophets of the Old Testament were the heralds of salvation, proclaiming it in terms appropriate to their times. A verse from the Psalms, typical of many others, foretells what is coming: "Thou art my son, I have begotten thee this day." The Father of Jesus Christ declared the mystery of his Fatherhood in the incarnation of his only Son, whom he is continually begetting as "Word" in the eternal Now and Today. In David's verse, time seemed to stand still and eternity dawned in a prophetic forecast, till in Jesus' birth of the Virgin it became full visible reality. The imparting of God's nature to men continued in the revelation of the Gospel, which contains the tidings that Christ's Father is our Father too, as our Lord taught, calling his followers "... true sons of your Father in heaven" (Matt. 5:45). "Your Father knows well that you need ..." (Luke 12:30). "This, then, is to be your prayer: Our Father ..." (Matt. 6:9). And Paul and John, in their old age, have it too: "The spirit you have now received is not as of old, a spirit of slavery, to govern you by fear, it is the spirit of adoption, which makes us cry out, Abba, Father" (Rom. 8:15). "See how God has shown his love towards us; that we should be counted as his sons, should be his sons" (I John 3:1).

Nonetheless, the name of the Father remains hidden, as Origen taught. The name of the Father is a mystery, because it includes the whole Trinity. For where the Father is, the Son is also necessarily there, and where God the Father and God the Son are, the third holy Person of the one Godhead is not absent, the Holy Spirit is also necessarily there. That is why the commentaries on the "Our Father" say unanimously, at all times, that we address the words of our prayer to the most holy Trinity. Out of sheer human inability to grasp that God is "Father," Philip said, "Lord, let us see the Father; that is all we ask." Jesus pointed out that he was himself the Son, and replied: "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9). This means: whoever sees me in faith as the eternal Son of the eternal Father, sees my Father too. He believes in what is eternal and beholds it too, seeing indivisible almighty Godhead as the love which is poured out for men, the love on account of which I am a Man. Whoever sees me, and the Father in me, in this way, is a true worshipper in spirit and in truth.

Through the fact that the Son of God became Man and bound himself to us in the flesh, we share the Father with Christ, the only-begotten Son. But this sharing was still not all that love intended, and God wished to bind us to him still more closely; more so, even, than the first human couple. In a new conception and a new birth he elected to be our Father and breathe into us his Spirit, the breath of love between Father and Son. "A man cannot see the kingdom of God without being born anew" (John 3:3), so the Lord taught Nicodemus in the night, describing rebirth in God as birth "from water and from the Holy Spirit."

This rebirth of man takes place in holy baptism. It is continued in the sacramental life of the Church. In the waters of baptism Christ has reopened the sealed fount of living water. It was done on the cross when blood and water poured out of his wounded heart. In the hour of his death, our rebirth took place in the birth of the Church; just as Eve came out of Adam's side,

the Church issued from the side of the new Adam, Christ. She is our Mother; Christ is our Father. His Holy Spirit made the womb of the water conceive, and in its depth occurs the mystery of birth in God.

The designation "Father" for Christ was familiar to the early Church; in later times it tended to disappear from men's minds and prayers. In reference to the prologue of St. John's Gospel St. Augustine makes our Lord say: "When I was in the beginning God in God, I made you. That is not what I would teach you, but that I made myself be what I myself had made." As the "Word, in which all things are and through which all is created," he first excluded himself, as Father, from the creation. But in the hour of redemption he brought into being a new creation, which marks him to a still higher degree as Father. Thus a new status is conferred on man in baptism, by which he becomes child of the Father.

Only after baptism Christians have a full right to call themselves sons and daughters of God and to address God as Father. Thus the "Our Father" is most appropriately the prayer of the newly-baptized, the first words of the child to its Father. It is vocal support for their faith in sacramental baptism. And whenever the prayer is repeated, it always remains a confession of faith; the opening has the character of a renewal of baptismal vows.

Our Father! I am thy child. I am thy image and likeness and kin. May thy mind therefore be mine too. Eternal youth and freedom are my lot. I have put aside the dress of the old man. I have died to sin and risen with Christ. I have put him on, the new man, in holiness and justice. Thy Son is my brother, in him I am thy child, with him I am heir of the kingdom of heaven. All is mine if I am but thine. Our Father! Thou dost give these gifts not to me alone, but to all men who in Christ belong to thee. In thee we are a holy fellowship, a family of God, brothers and sisters together. Now there is no more loneliness nor forlornness. Praying, we hold out our hands to one another, to

thank thee and praise thee forever. Loving, we are bound in thy love, helping one another.

So may we pray, with the blessed assurance of being God's children for whom the "Our Father" is a prayer of faith, hope and love. In possession of the gift of his grace, God's likeness, man rejoices, bearing heaven within him; not the visible heavens of sun and moon and stars, but the original heaven, lit with the light of eternal wisdom, the invisible heaven of God the holy Trinity enthroned in man. In the hope of the revelation of coming glory the baptized live and are sanctified. It is an exacting sanctification. Full possession of divine sonship must be striven for in the trials and tribulations of a long life. For what God gives through no merit of ours requires our consent and active response to become properly ours.

It may happen that even the baptized will stumble in faith or lose hope in the "Father in heaven," the loud voice of "father of lies" drowning the voice of God's word. Then, as it seems, God the Father does not hear us, he is silent. Every Christian sooner or later comes to this testing-point with the "Our Father," when hard things happen to him whose sense is hidden from him. The more he can free his spirit from earthly things, the more fervently he can say "Our Father" like a "beggar in spirit," the more gloriously will the wonders of blessedness shine before his eyes, those that the Fathers dwell on in their "Our Father" commentaries, and the theologians and the poets, too.

That blissful awareness of being endowed with God's image is reflected chiefly in the elucidations of the first Christian centuries; within this period it is again the Fathers of the Eastern Church who in sober holy ecstasy most felicitously hymn their praises. Not that they overlook the obligation of sanctification that is the concomitant of all this glory. Every increase in virtue emphasizes the likeness to God, every attempt to do as he does brings it more strongly into evidence. Christians of those days were not exempt from decisions to be made in the light of faith

nor from the duty of sanctification in daily life. They, too, were placed, as the Christian is today, in the midst of a heathen world and a secular society. They lived at the end of a civilization, a time of over-refined culture with many-sided attractions and allurements. They, too, were threatened by persecution on account of their faith. How strongly alive their faith was—and it succeeded in conquering the world—the commentaries on the opening words of the Lord's Prayer make abundantly clear. Often, with theological depth of thought there goes a beauty of expression which is as timeless as the truth it illumines. So it is not only that these commentaries are a delight to the mind, but what Origen, St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Chrysostom, St. Augustine said about the "Our Father" could and should be the criterion for our prayer today. Likeness to God, gradual transformation through the most detailed perfection of virtue, close kinship with Christ and the Father, ascent to God, are Christian ideas current in the writings of early Eastern mysticism, partly parallel with the more sober utterances of the Romans. In the early middle ages, still wholly under the influence of the great tradition, the "Our Father" commentaries depended on early Christian theology. Whether the Greeks or the Latins were preferred was a matter of personal taste or accident. In course of time, other trains of thought crept in and worked their way into the foreground. They took existing conditions into consideration and followed lines of their own, more practical ones. Their purpose was to penetrate the eternal verities with reason, and work them into a system to be followed step by step in practical daily life. The content of revelation was incorporated into philosophical studies, after the methods of the Schools, and analyzed with hearts full of faith. In the late middle ages, the connection with public worship was less and less stressed, and human observation and human knowledge largely replaced the imparted word of revelation. At this time, meditation on God's likeness seems to have vanished from men's minds, and holy fear too. God the Father was more like an exalted human fa-

ther. Late Gothic art shows him in this manner: God among his children. The intimacy of intercourse between the Father in heaven and the Son on earth was carried to all extremes in thirteenth and fourteenth century mysticism. These are tendencies which lived on into the time of the renewal of faith, when the systematic scrutiny of the content of revelation by philosophy was much in favor.

After the reformation, the tendency was to rest on tradition, either reviving ideas originating from the Church Fathers, or continuing scholastic philosophy. But the basic content and revealed truths remained the same, only the forms of expression altered with the times. Angelus Silesius came upon delightful and daring turns of phrase, Teresa of Avila gave her daughters instructions based on the "Our Father," and Fénelon composed a heroic prayer of self-surrender from the first words of the Paternoster. The days, strong in faith, of the Catholic revival of the early nineteenth century, drew upon the "Our Father" freely, or rediscovered it and took fresh possession of its content. Likewise, in the second half of the nineteenth century and in the twentieth, the prayer was seized upon as a saving anchorage by those who had had a rough crossing, whether coming from a former faith in "humanity" or "reason," or from utter loss of faith. Thus, Eichendorff's "Our Father" paraphrase has the effect of an "in spite of all" to God, after a stiff tussle with doubt and misgivings. Carl Sonnenschein's Berlin "Our Father" bears witness to the desperate battle for faith in the Father which had to be waged in this age of socialism with all its consequent confusion and distress. He shows how, after all, God is Father for our time, too. In Alfred Delp's "Our Father," what comes to light is the senselessness of human existence without God and the anxiety that besets it; his remarks show the only way to win through, and explain in simple language how the relation between man and God is to be accounted for. But again and again we hear a voice telling of the inexpressible peace of those who know how sure God's love is, and who trust in his

paternal guidance even amid all the disquiet of this world of ours (F. Varillon). Modern theology has no lack of good commentaries on the Lord's Prayer, where scholarly thoroughness is coupled with genuine Catholic piety.

But the Father of the human race is the Logos of God, as Moses indicated when he said: Has not this thy Father possessed thee and made thee and created thee? But when did he pour out the seed of life, that is, the Spirit for the remission of sins, upon the human race? Was it not when he ate with men and drank wine on earth?

IRENÆUS

The prayer begins with a witness for God and with an assurance of faith, when we say: Father, who art in heaven. For we are thereby praying to God and declaring our faith, of which this mode of address is an element. When we so pray, we are fulfilling a commandment.

TERTULLIAN

New, reborn man, restored to God through grace, says first of all "Father," because he is already his Son.

When we call God our Father, then we have to show that we are God's children. As it is pleasing to us to have God for Father, so should God have pleasure in us. We would be God's temple, it should be evident to all that God lives in us! We want to be true men of the Spirit in all our doings. We, who are now men of the Spirit and men of heaven, want to think and to act in a manner worthy of the Holy Spirit and of heaven.

CYPRIAN OF CARTHAGE

Be gracious to thy children, Teacher, Father, Leader of Israel, Son and Father, both in one, O Lord!

We possess un-aging youth . . . for those must be new who have been granted participation in the new Logos. Whatever participates in eternity tends to resemble what is immortal, so that for us to be called children denotes the spring of life, because the truth in us is ever young. . . . Wisdom is always in flower, it remains like itself and never alters at all.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

The name of the Father is a great mystery.

The Father's feast of salvation in the world is the Son.

Your Father in the Spirit is God, your Mother the heavenly Jerusalem.

The resemblance relates not to nature but to grace.

Many times blessed is he who is born of God. For I do not say, the just man will only once be born of God, but that wherever virtue is at work the just man is born, and it is thus God gives birth to the just man. But I could associate you with the Redeemer (for the Father did not bear him only to dismiss him after birth, but goes on bearing him forever and ever), and say the same thing occurs in the case of the just man. But we know how it is with our Savior, "who is the radiance of his Father's splendor" (Heb. 1:3). The Radiance of Splendor did not appear once only to disappear again, but as long as the light lasts that brings forth radiance, so long will the radiance of God's splendor last. Our Redeemer is the Wisdom of God, and this Wisdom is "the glow that radiates from eternal light" (Wis. 7:26). If our Redeemer is born of the Father forever and ever, you too are born by God in him, when you have received the spirit of sonship, in all you do and all you think, and thus born, you shall be born forever and ever as God's child in Jesus Christ. Do not think that one renewal of life, once for all, so to speak, is sufficient; rather forever and ever, and every day, if one may say so, the newness itself is for renewing. As the apostle says: "Though the outward part of our nature is being worn down, our inner life is refreshed from day to day" (II Cor. 4:6).

ORIGEN

Who can see God's Being? Only the One who is of him may behold him. Splendid above all is the brightness of the Father! Only the One sees the One, only the One may behold the One, and through the One all creatures see him.—All pray from afar to the hidden Father through the visible Son.

If you can discover the Father, you find in him the Son too.—The Father works through the Son, and through him he gives his commands. Only they know one another mutually. In the Father's bosom is the Son, when he loves. At his right hand is he, when he sits enthroned. Him he loves, him he beholds!

The First-Born is with his Father. He remained with him and came to us. He is with him and with us too. He came and he went although he is everywhere. Creation is full of his whole Being

and the while he is wholly in his Father. No voice can tell either his coming or his going. Before he came he was already here, and after he went away he is still here. Before he went to his Father he was already wholly with him. He went thither although he was already there. He came hither although he was already here. He came, and he went, without parting.

EPHRAIM THE SYRIAN

The "Word" is beloved by the Father as Only-Begotten, and by the whole of creation as a Father friendly to man.

BASIL THE GREAT

Heaven, that is those who bear the image of what is heavenly in them, in which God lives and moves.

CYRIL OF JERUSALEM

In the Son, the Father accomplishes his descent, in prayer we accomplish our ascent to that Nature that knows no change.

Father! What spirituality is necessary for this prayer! What a trust! What a conscience!—Thus, when we appear before God, we want first to examine our life, whether we bear in us anything worthy of kinship with God; only if we do can we venture to pray thus. Accordingly, only he who is living a life appropriate to the nobility of our divine kinship can raise his eyes confidently to the heavenly City, when he calls the King of heaven, Father, and the blessedness of heaven, his home.

It is dangerous to presume to pray this prayer and call God Father before we have rectified our life.—The beauty of the divine image can be defaced by passion. But if you are without passion, then you can well invoke God by this dear name, calling the Lord of the universe your Father. With fatherly eyes he looks down upon you, he clothes you in godly raiment, he places his ring on your finger; with the shoes of the Gospel he will equip your feet for your journey upwards, and lead you back into your heavenly home.

GREGORY OF NYSSA

As the prayer begins with the praise of God, so it must end in praise: "Our Father who art in heaven." It is praise of God when the Father is proclaimed; therein lies the glory of his loving-kindness. It is praise of God, for He dwells in heaven, not on earth.

AMBROSE

Since we were reborn through water and the Holy Spirit, we have God as our Father.

CHROMATIUS OF AQUILEIA

Observe how God first encourages his hearer, with the very first words recalling to mind all sorts of benefits. For he who calls God by the name of Father, simply by using this form of address confesses to his belief in forgiveness of sins, remission of punishment, justification, sanctification, redemption, adoption, inheritance and brotherhood with the Only-Begotten, as well as fellowship with the Holy Spirit.—But he also teaches us to pray together for our brethren. For he does not say: My Father who art in heaven, but, *Our* Father. By this means he would raise our prayer to be an intercession for the entire Church, and teach us never to have our own personal advantage in view, but always and everywhere that of our neighbor.—Thus he makes enmities impossible, he suppresses pride, banishes envy and gives access to the source of all that is good; to love. He removes inequality among men and shows that the king is not much higher than the beggar, for in the highest and most important things we are all alike.—God gave the same nobility of birth to all, when he deigned to be called the common Father of all men.

Therefore possess among yourselves love of God, that you may be of *one* heart and *one* mind, and can rightly say to God: Our Father!

JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

In the opening of the Lord's Prayer, our Lord teaches us Christian love of neighbors, saying, "Our Father," that is to say, we live on earth to have a Father in heaven, we witness to love and brotherliness when we say "Our." Rulers and beggars, lords and servants all pray saying: "Our Father." But those who have *one* Father are brothers. The Lord did not think it beneath his dignity to have his servant as his brother, for Christ the Lord wants to be his brother. Let us prove that we deserve to be heirs of the Father; for even human law makes the sons heirs.

JEROME

You shall say, Our Father who art in heaven. From this you perceive that you have God as Father. It is so when you are reborn in your baptismal bath. And as you have just been reborn of

his seed, you are received into the womb of the Church.—Our Father who art in heaven! Remember, you were born of our father Adam unto death, and of our Father God are restored to life. Say what you say with your whole heart!

We find a Father in heaven; let us take care how we live on earth. Whoever finds such a Father must live so as to deserve to come into his inheritance. But we say *Our* Father together. What an honor! The emperor says it, so does the beggar; the slave says it, so does his master. Together they say: Our Father who art in heaven. Thus they admit they are brothers, because they have *one* Father. A master ought not to be reluctant to have his slave as his brother, when Jesus Christ wanted to have him as brother!

AUGUSTINE

There is a degree of prayer which consists only in contemplation and in fervent love. At this stage the spirit is wholly engrossed in loving God, and speaks to God in trustful childlike love as to its own father. We must eagerly endeavor to reach this degree of prayer. We are exhorted to it by the opening words of the Lord's Prayer: Our Father. In these words we acknowledge God as the Father of the universe, who has called us out of slavery to be sons.

JOHN CASSIAN

The greatest of all the gifts of grace to men is, that God is men's Father. Consider well, O man, what honor has been done you, in that you may call God, Father. And take this to heart, too: conduct yourself as is befitting to the honor of God, that men both high and low may acknowledge you are, in fact, a child of God.

ELISIAS OF ARMENIA

With the opening of the prayer we declare that we honor and acknowledge with reverence the Holy Trinity, of equal substance, surpassing all being, as our Cause and Author.

MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR

Hear the voice of the Lord proclaiming the Gospel. Of him the prophet said: "Let the skies pour down upon us the rain we long for, him, the Just One." He poured out the light of hidden Wisdom and opened the well of springing water to refresh our aridity with the dew of his discourse. Who disclosed to men the secret of this heavenly mystery, or dared venture to know it or even teach

it? Abraham? Moses? A Prophet or a messenger of God? Who, indeed, if not the Only-Begotten, to whom alone the Father is known in the fullness of his majesty? Those others were accorded just that amount of knowledge on earth that he himself elected to bestow on them from heaven. The Son, in whom the Father is to be found in a unity of essence, not as a fusion of persons, had full possession of this knowledge; not as a gift received, but of his very nature. So when we say our Father is in heaven, it means our journeying too, for as long as we are here on earth; for it is written: "Comfort this earthly exile" (Ps. 118:19). By this he appears to teach us constantly to raise our minds to heaven so that with God's assistance we may accomplish what has to be done before entering into the blessedness of eternal life, and thus be fit to receive what the Son has in store for us. But that occurs through the Father's loving-kindness and Christ's guidance. But on hearing this, no son could be so foolish as not to throw himself into the arms of his true Father. Rightly do we say, "Our Father," for a man reborn in baptism is God's son, who formerly through disloyalty was God's enemy, was lost. Therefore whoever enjoys this gift of grace can frankly claim him as Father. But naturally we are not sons in the same way as our Lord Jesus Christ, who was born of God's essence. For he made us of earth. But through the grace of the Only-Begotten we are made worthy to be accepted as sons, and ever since, everyone who is reborn in the Catholic Church of water and the Holy Spirit, is reckoned among the sons of God.

VENANTIUS FORTUNATUS

We address these words of prayer to God the Trinity.

ILDEFONS OF TOLEDO

Our Father who art in heaven. O man, prove through good works that you are his son, then you call him Father by right. Have love of brothers, then you are his son.

NOTKER OF ST. GALL

When we say "Our Father" in prayer, we direct our words to the indivisible Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God, who accepted us as sons, out of grace.

PHILIP OF RATHSAMHAUSEN

Father is a name coming from the very source of nature, it is a

name of love. For from the Father everything proceeds, and from the Father comes that sweet inclination to love pouring into us from him and out of us to him.—Father! Thus the whole Trinity is invoked.

ALBERT THE GREAT

How God is our Father

Say "Father," and take cognizance of two things: how God is our Father, and what we owe him as Father. He is called Father because of creation, for he created us according to his image and likeness, which he did not imprint upon the lower creatures. He is "that father who calls thee his own, that creator who fashioned thee" (Deut. 32:6). Moreover, he is Father as Ruler. Although he rules over everything, he rules us as masters, the rest of the creatures as slaves. "It is thy fatherly providence that brings her (the ship) safe to port" (Wis. 14:3). "A lenient Judge thou provest thyself, riding us with a light rein" (Wis. 12:18). And by admitting us to the status of children, God is Father, for he gave the other creatures, as we might say, little gifts, but to us he gave the inheritance, for we are sons. "If we are his children, then we are his heirs, too."—"The spirit you have now received is not, as of old, a spirit of slavery, to govern you by fear; it is the spirit of adoption, which makes us cry out, Abba, Father" (Rom. 8:15).

Our duties towards God the Father

These are three-fold. First, *honor*. "Your Father, I; where is the honor you owe me?" (Mal. 1:6). It consists in three things. In praise of God: "He honors me truly, who offers me a sacrifice of praise" (Ps. 49:23). This dare not be mere lip-service, but must also be praise from the heart: "This people does me honor with its lips, but its heart is far from me" (Is. 29:13). Further, honor done to God consists in purity of body. "Glorify God by making your bodies the shrines of his presence" (I Cor. 6:20). And again, in just judgment of neighbors: "Dearly thy kingly heart loves justice" (Ps. 99:4).

Secondly, we owe God the Father *imitation* of himself. "Must I ever be pleading with thee to acknowledge me as thy father, and forsake my guidance no more?" (Jer. 3:19). Imitation grows perfect, first in love: "As God's favored children, you must be like

him. Order your lives in charity" (Eph. 5:1); this must come about in the heart. Secondly, in mercy; love must go hand in hand with mercy; "Be merciful" (Luke 6:36), and this must show itself in practice. Thirdly, in perfection, for love and mercy must be perfect. "You are to be perfect, as your heavenly father is perfect" (Matt: 5:48).

Thirdly, we owe God *obedience*: "Shall we not submit, far more willingly, to the father of a world of spirits?" (Hebr. 12:9), for the sake of example too, for the true Son was obedient to the Father even to death, as we read in the Epistle to the Philippians. But we should obey for the sake of our own happiness, too: "It was at the Lord's coming. He it is that has chosen me; and before his coming play the mountebank I will" (II Kings 6:21).

Further, we owe God *patience in afflictions*. "My son, do not undervalue the correction the Lord sends thee, do not be unmannered when he reproves thy faults. It is where he loves that he bestows correction, like a father whose son is dear to him" (Prov. 3:11-12).

What we owe our neighbor

Say, "Our." From this it is clear that we owe neighbors two things. To begin with, love, for they are our brothers, for all are sons of God: "He has seen his brother, and has no love for him; what love can he have for the God he has never seen?" (I John, 4:20). And we also owe them respect because we are sons of God. "Have we not all one Father, did not one God create us all? No room, then, for brother to despise brother, and unmake the covenant by which our fathers lived" (Mal. 2:10). "Be affectionate towards each other" (Rom. 12:10). And this is to be done for the sake of the fruit; "He wins eternal salvation for all who render obedience to him" (Hebr. 5:9).

THOMAS AQUINAS

Our Father: Father of all creatures, good or bad, intelligent or stupid, visible or invisible, according to creation, without whom we should neither be nor live. Ours, by grace, through men's Mediator, Jesus Chrst. Ours, for life and eternal inheritance. Ours in life, in death, in good or ill fortune, without whom we can neither desire nor have a world and blessedness, without whom all creatures and all gifts, in heaven or on earth, are insufficient for

us, if thou thyself art not ours. But if thou art ours and we are thine, we have all things in thee, from whom and through whom and in whom all things are. What should I have in heaven and what should I desire on earth, without thee? Therefore be thou our Father, for we are thy children.

Father: sweet in love, strong in redemption, merciful in conversion, in the blessed kingdom great in thy gifts, eternal in inheritance.

Who art in heaven: a mirror of eternity, a fount of honors, a treasure of blessedness, a fount of life. We miserable orphans cry to thee, weeping and lamenting, like grieved children crying to their father, who out of natural love and mercy gladly gives them what they need; so that we may go the way of thy commands which thou hast pointed out to us—to heaven, where thou dost await us with all the saints and angels. So hear us in our lifetime. Amen.

MASTER HANS GEUSS

What a father is, we find in nature: he is a beginning for other beings, who come from him or pour out of him. Son comes from father, bough and fruit from tree, water from the well, and so it is everywhere. God the Father is the one Beginning of all beings that are in heaven or on earth or that can be imagined. In himself alone He is Threefold according to Persons and yet only One. Out of the One come the Many, and the Many are but One. For each number has in the One its beginning and its end, and no number remains the same, when one is taken away from it. Man, a heavenly, spiritual nature, is a reflection of God and the Holy Trinity: a reflection of God the Father who is eternal, in immortality; a reflection of the Son, in reason (or better) in truth, which lights up reason and makes it shine with the brightness of wisdom, a wisdom comprehending truth; a reflection of the Holy Spirit in the will which, lit by the Holy Spirit, demands nothing but what is good.

NICHOLAS OF CUES

In regard to this birth and reemergence through baptism, we are members of Christ and come out of Christ; his blood and flesh are in us, and he is Son of God and we his brothers. Therefore he tells us to pray: Our Father. Thus you know that he is natural Father to us, of all the creatures, a father in the flesh, who came

down from heaven, and we are his children in that flesh. And there is beside ourselves no one who could pray Our Father, even though belonging to God. This Father is in heaven and not on earth. Therefore it is written, "Who art in heaven," as a sign that we no longer belong to the earthly father but to the eternal one, who is in heaven, whose flesh and blood we are, born through his Son, who bore us in the flesh that came down from heaven; now in his Person the Father is neither flesh nor blood, but his Son was born flesh and blood. Therefore we leave off all earthly things and live and dwell henceforth according to the heavenly flesh, and must see that we do not sully it. For it comes from a chaste body and blood and from a purity that is above all nature and all creatures. For we of the new creation are sons of God and Mary, and brothers of Christ.

THEOPHRASTUS PARACELUS

You know that God is everywhere. Now wherever the king is, his court is with him, likewise wherever God is, heaven is too. You can take it as certain beyond doubt that where divine majesty is, his whole glory is enthroned. St. Augustine tells us that after he had long sought God in outward things, he found him within himself. Strive with all your powers to grasp this truth; for your distracted souls, it is very important to know that they need not force their way up to heaven nor raise their voice to find their delight in intercourse with the divine Father. He is so near to us that he is aware of the least movement of our lips and attends to our most inward word to him. We need no wings to seek him out; it is enough to be alone and to look within ourselves; for there he dwells. If his majesty fills us with dread, his kindness reassures us. Certainly we must approach him very humbly, but at the same time with great love, as children going to their father, and present our needs to him confidently, bemoaning our afflictions, to implore his help and at the same time to acknowledge that we are not worth calling his children.

TERESA OF AVILA

I, too, am son of God, I sit beside him;
His spirit, flesh, and blood is known to him in me.

If you would call the highest God your Father,
You must admit, first, that you are his child.

Stop! where are you running? Heaven's within you;
 Seeking God elsewhere, you're sure to miss him.

ANGELUS SILESIUS

I know and hold fast
 Proclaiming it frankly,
 God, highest and best,
 Is friend and father to me.

Whatever may happen,
 He stands at my side:
 Storm and waves quieten,
 My hurt is laid aside.

PAUL GERHARDT

Father of mercy! No, I will not philosophize about grace, but in silence let it take possession of me. It does everything in a man, but it does it all with him and through him. So I must be active with it, with it I must keep myself under control, suffer, endure and resist, believe, hope and love. O God, let me always be and remain among those children to whom thou didst reveal thy mystery, hiding it from the wise and clever people of this world.

FRANÇOIS DE FÉNELON

My Savior, be my advocate with thy heavenly Father, give me the spirit of adoption and prayer, the spirit which calls out: Abba, dear Father. Let it come to the help of my ineptitude and unworthiness with its inexpressible groaning. Let me be filled with disgust of the filthy rags of my own righteousness and cast them from me; clothe thou me with the white silk of thy justice and holiness, bought for me at such a price. Let me walk in thy power and strength, upright, godly let me move in thy sight. Give me the shield of faith to parry all the fiery darts of the evil one. Be thou my shield and my very great reward. Remain with us when it is evening; help us to struggle, manfully to win through to thee through death and life.

JOHANN GEORG HAMANN

"Our Father."—Here we say: Great Creator and King of heaven and earth. Thou art no Lord in unapproachable majesty and distance, but (although infinitely great and terrible) our Father—art

so right in love, so full of care and devotion for us, so considerate of our salvation, so ready and mighty to help, so long-suffering and propitiating, as no earthly father is towards his children nor could be.—And thus as thou art to me, art to all others too.

With the words “who art in heaven,” we lift up our hearts to him from here on earth. He is everywhere, but everywhere above us, and we can speak to him only when we raise ourselves up from the earth into the Invisible.

JOHANN BAPTIST VON HIRSCHER

Here I am, Lord! Welcome, light
That bursts upon my weary breast,
Rending its sultriness with might,
Cool, challenging and chaste.
I reel and sway, but I am free!
Yet dazed and stupefied—
O Father, thou who knowest me
Wilt keep me by thy side.

JOSEPH VON EICHENDORFF

(From the Berlin slums)

Our Father! Is it possible? Till today no one was good to me. My father drank. My mother died in Wittenau. I grew up in the old Jakobstrasse. I was put on probation in Moabit. The sunshine alone sometimes gives me the feel of a kind hand. And to you, I dare say Father! That is a new feeling. And the rest, brothers? I had a brother and a sister. They lie buried in Weissensee. It was icy cold at the funeral, and since then I have always been cold.

Who art in heaven! Heaven is so far away above our city. Elsewhere, it covers house and home with its golden warmth. Its warm hands reach down into the cellar even, and grasp the world tenderly. But in Berlin, it is as far off as the stars. Another land! Where we have no postal communications! The saints who climbed up there are the bold pilots. And we gaze after them. O, that you were near to us, you distant, great, eternal God!

CARL SONNENSCHN

Whoever prays “Our Father” wants to accept and to believe. Hence the special meaning of the word “Father.”

If our way takes us through battle and danger, we are well protected. Our Father in heaven is greater than anything that can rise up against us.

Though he relentlessly shatter our hope and our means of livelihood, we still know his hands protect us: "Father!" Though anxiety and trouble befall us, our heart is steadfast and cheerful; they cannot harm us. But if guilt and sin oppress us, we are sure the Father will forgive and put it right.

The opening words, "Our Father," already declare all the matter of the seven petitions, embracing the whole of life—from right faith at the beginning down to deliverance from evil.

It is immense: Christ has entitled us to set the word "Father" above all life's battles, dangers and changing fortunes. There is no blind destiny in command for us to fear, but the will of a father in whom we can trust. We can speak to him and he will hear us. No power on earth can force God's hand—but the folded hands of the suppliant break through the barriers between heaven and earth.

Thus a proper prayer is as good as a miracle. But this miracle is given us for our own. And therefore with courage and confidence we bring all our concerns to the Father, for he is Lord, and his are the kingdom, the power and the glory. Those who pray to him have precedence: they are his children.

FRIEDRICH DUENSING

For Christians, God received a new name, one intended for them alone: the name of Father. They have entered upon a relationship with God that expresses all the consolation, all the sense of protection, all the happiness and blessedness which are included in the deepest and fullest sense of the word, Father. To them a confidence and a love are given which surpass all human understanding, and are gathered together in one word: Our Father, who art in heaven. Father is the name of God for those who through the Father's Son were consecrated as children of the Father.

THADDÄUS SOIRON

The Logos, too, is called, like the Father, Creator, King, Guide, Master and Ruler of the universe.

Of Christ's marriage with the Church Christians are born. Christ becomes Father in baptism.

BASILIIUS STEIDLE

The Father is repose and ultimate peace. In him alone is our soul's last home to be found. And only he who has learned not to

pause on the way to the Father, who has learned to let himself be led to Christ by the Holy Spirit, and from Christ to our heavenly Father, is in the right order of things. Only he whose gaze at all times constantly is raised to the Father, has a heart that is free and wide open. This human heart attuned to Christ's is wide open, not only because of a gaze soaring up into the eternal heights, but also because of love's all-embracing power. It is not closed in on itself, nor does it remain attached only to the few people nature and inclination have brought within reach, but it grows as large as Christ's own heart is large: it takes in everyone, all children of the same Father, and its prayer issues from the heart of all of them: Our Father!

ROMANO GUARDINI

The most powerful word of all must be a word from Holy Scripture which no one other than God himself could bestow on us; it must be a word of the New Testament, for in it is found fulfillment, it must be a word of the Lord's own, for to him is given all power in heaven and earth. But what is this word, most powerful of all? It is likewise his profoundest and dearest, his love's word, the word of his joy, the word of his thanksgiving, the word of his heart: *Father*.

EUGEN WALTER

I am their Father, said God. Our Father who art in heaven.
My Son was telling them that I am their Father. . . .
And now I have got to judge them like a Father. In so far as a
father is any good at judging. . . .
It's an old story how the father judged the son who went off
and came back again.
Of the two it was the father who shed most tears.

CHARLES PÉGUY

Father, to thee I turn this evening with tranquil and peaceful trust. Thy Son taught me that thou art my Father, that we dare not call thee by any other name. Thou art simply Father. Father, I come simply to tell thee that I am thy child, and I say it in all seriousness, and yet there comes over me a wish to laugh and sing, it is so lovely to be thy son; it is serious enough, for thou hast loved me so much and I have loved thee so little. Father, make of me what thou wilt; I am here wholly to do thy will. I know what

thy will is: I am to be like thy Only-Begotten Son, the older Brother who taught me thy name. . . . O Father, I have no power, but I have thy power. Work in me, build up and cut away, raise me high or leave me utterly alone, I shall never insult thee by being afraid or believing thou hast forgotten me; and if I find the cross too heavy, and can see no way out, I can unceasingly cry out to thee that I believe in thy love and that I accept thy will. . . . But I would drink out of the same cup as thy Son. O Father, do not deny me this. . . . But thou wilt not deny it me, for I know that it is thy will. See, Father, here I am: I have been a continual trouble to thee, but thou wilt continually forgive me. In love I shall always be beaten. . . . But wherever thou sendest me, whether I am cheerful or lonely, ill or well, successful or looked down upon, thou wilt not hinder the spirit in me from crying out mightily to thee; eager to win thy love for my brothers, the people who do not know that thou art Father. O Father, here is my life, but give me my brothers so that I may give them back to thee. . . .

FRANÇOIS VARILLON

When we open our hearts, when we pause in our wild flight from ourselves, when the appearance of God-forsaken solitude that we hitherto fled from, is mysteriously turned into the true presence of God, when in the stillness of our heart we begin to pray: Our Father, are we the only ones who venture to say these immense words to God? Who helps us to pray? Where does the courage and power to pray come from?

One thing that gives us power is that we are speaking to God in company with his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. He who can pray to the Father in spirit and in truth because he rests on the Father's heart as the Only-Begotten forever and ever, has invited us, his brothers in flesh and in spirit, confidently and boldly with him to call the eternal living God of Judgment and all that is beyond our comprehension, Father—And so we can talk to God in Jesus Christ, and in the Church, the fellowship of Christ's brothers, without having to die of horror at such presumption on the part of mere dust and ashes. It is because the Son spoke to the Father as the Father's messenger to us and as our Brother, that we can pray. Were the Son with his word not here, here as the Father's Word to us, had he not prayed among our hills and valleys, with our rejoicing and our tears, then we should forever have to fear lest the words of our prayer be swallowed up by the silent incom-

prehensibility above and around us, for which we have no name. But now, consoled, we say, Our Father, because we say it with Jesus. And this child-like Abba—dear Father, is unspeakably more true than all metaphysics about God which place man at a “proper” distance from God, whereas his love in the Son and in the holy fellowship of his brothers leaped over the infinite distance between him and us long ago, and took us to his heart.

KARL RAHNER

Many people in praying need go no further than the words “Our Father.” That one word is sufficient: Father! It says all there is to be said. It says more than all other words used in praying, because it is the eternal infinite word of the Son, because it will be our eternal word in him, the word that means love and worship, thanksgiving and dependence, surrender and conception and homecoming, life and participation in the intimate life of the Trinity, and on this account, perfect joy and blessedness.

Father! That is the whole prayer, the very essence of the prayer at its loveliest and loftiest. A spiritual man who realizes the full implication of the opening words of the “Our Father,” is aware of what bond of love unites him to the Father in the Holy Spirit, and knows his divine Son-ship in the Son, in whom, through the Spirit, he utters the word that expresses his whole life as blessed by God, whether passive or active: Father! May God send into our hearts the spirit of his Son for He it is who cries: Abba—Father.

LEO VEUTHEY

HALLOWED BE THY NAME

There is much more to the word "name" than modern man is aware of. For us, the name of a thing or a person is something more or less irrelevant. For a man to be called Smith or Brown, for a thing to be named this or that, makes no odds. "Name, noise, smoke"—to Goethe they were much the same, that is, a name is something that is blown away and vanishes into thin air, and therefore cannot be of any great importance. And in popular parlance it is commonly held that it does not matter at all what a child is called. And this too only goes to show that the thing named is more important than its name. So that name and object, name and what is named, are for people today two quite different things. What is named is, at all events, more valued than the plain name. It is a tendency that can be traced back to the middle ages, when nominalism, as it was called, threatened the disruption of that intimate bond between the nature of a thing and its name. The process has continued ever since and now presents one of the most significant symptoms of our threatened state, exposed as it is to all the powers of falsehood and prevarication.

The equivalence of name and named, of God's essence in God's name, came and comes most clearly to view in the use of names in worship. If God is named, he is present. That is why it is so important to know his real name. If his name is spoken, God is here. Because he is good, his presence conveys his loving-kindness: he protects, heals, guides, shelters. The night begins in all quietness when first the name of God is spoken over house and home. The fields are safe from evil influences and bear rich fruit when the name of God is invoked over them. Nothing evil can happen where God is present through the naming of his name.

A study of folklore shows that primitive peoples held and

still hold to the inseparable unity of name and thing or person. And the history of old oriental, Greek and Roman thought reveals the same: name means nature. The name is the thing itself, the name is this or that person. Their unity is so close that the one can stand for the other. This way of looking at things has to be taken into account in the first petition of the Lord's Prayer. It is not quite extinct even in modern usage: for instance, when lovers say one another's names, they mean the whole person, and in the saying of a name they want to establish a real meeting of Me and You. And in the word "nameless" there is a slumbering remnant of the deeper meaning of the word "name," for "nameless" can mean indefinable, inexpressible, as well as obscure, inglorious, or almost nonexistent.

Old-Testament Judaism had the same view of the unity of name and what-is-named as pagan antiquity. And its native language fostered a positive name-cult: "I have given thee the name thou bearest, thou belongest to me," wrote the Prophet Isaias. The name of the twelve fathers of the Tribes was borne down successive generations and distinguished the very youngest member of a Tribe from among his fellow men. The strongly religious character of Judaism attached correspondingly great importance to the name of God. In the "name" they did honor to God. The Jews are said to have been acquainted with special mysteries concerning God's name, as the poet M. Claudius tells us in his meditations on the "Our Father." "Jahve," I AM, is the holy name under which the God of the Jews revealed his nature. This name was, for the Israelites, inexpressibly sublime and holy. It could not be pronounced, so lofty was it held to be.

Christianity knows of a still more powerful calling upon the name of God. For the true name of God was made known at last, namely the name of Father, which neither Jew nor pagan knew in its full significance.—Christ, the Son, first made the name of the Father known by word and deed, in the Gospel and in the redemption he effected. What God really is, is made

known through Christ, for "no one knows the Father but the Son." If God is not acknowledged through Christ, he becomes an "absolute idea" or a "blind basic will" or a "world-soul" bound to the body of the universe, with a demonic function in the eternal cycle of events; he becomes a myth.—Only after incarnation, passion, death and resurrection had taken place, as one eternally continuous act of salvation, was it possible, by naming the name of God, to call down, upon creatures of this earth, true God in Three Persons, so that they be made holy. Now, in baptism, the name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit is invoked over men who thereby become essentially different: Christ-bearers, God-bearers, Spirit-bearers, all called by the covering name of "Christians." And the gifts of the earth are now sanctified and consecrated when the name of the three-fold God is invoked over them: water and oil, flowers and fruit, and above all the Eucharistic gifts: bread and wine.

The Old-Testament commandment not to take the name of God in vain has received an even deeper meaning since the full name of God was made known. If the commandment forbids profanation, the prayer enjoins hallowing. A man should realize what power is laid on his lips, and this awareness should arouse holy awe in him. It is a profanation of God to speak his name "in vain," for in speaking the name of God man should realize the mission he has taken upon himself: he has become mouth-piece and voice of the whole of creation in the priestly service of praise and thanksgiving.—It is unnecessary to point out that the naming of a name in the Christian sense has nothing in common with magic incantations, it depends on the Person of the God-Man Jesus Christ and on the holiest, most candid faith of those who are chosen, called and sanctified by God for the purpose.

How highly Christ held the name of Father and how on his lips it was raised to the dignity of a holy thing, is shown in the high-priestly prayer of St. John's Gospel. In fact the fourth Gospel reveals throughout an intimate connection with the

opening words and first petition of the Lord's Prayer. The Church which is Christ living on, never wearies of watching to see that God's name of "Father" be kept holy. On the sixth Sunday after Pentecost she implores God to graft in our hearts the love of his name and thus to let us grow ever closer to him. —The apostles and early Christian writers adopted God's name for use in their holy mysteries. Besides God's name there is the name of Jesus, for which the Church later established a special festival. The Church herself is named with a holy name, she is called, and is, holy Jerusalem, "vision of peace." The victors in the battle with the world receive a stone on which the new name (of God) is written which no one knows except he who receives it. The first petition of the "Our Father" relates to this name, too.

Jesus' Prayer: "Hallowed be thy name" seems clear enough at a first glance, but on closer inspection is seen to be not so transparent as we thought. Is God's name really to be hallowed by us men and women? The holiest, to be hallowed by the sinful? It is hard to believe. For God is already in himself so holy that his holiness cannot increase nor can it decrease. How can anyone laden with guilt add to his holiness? —Clearly, the meaning of this petition must be sought elsewhere. As in the opening of the prayer the call to "Our Father" came from God himself, and as his voice opened the way of life to us, in his fatherly care urging us on, so is the hallowing of God, or of his Name, which is the same thing, an act of his own. It was revealed and it was performed by Christ. Through his incarnation Christ hallowed the Father's name by reconciling the fallen world to him and restoring it to its original purpose. Only in concord with him, in the one act of dying and rising again with him, can man, too, truly hallow God the Father and do him honor. The apostle Paul's expression "in Christ" is seen here in its deeper meaning, for the whole process of sanctification is only possible through him and with him and in him alone. After our Lord's resurrection, the process of sanctification passed from him into

the holy sacraments of the Church, and continues its work in the liturgy. The liturgy is *opus Dei*, a work done by and for God at the same time, and in performing it, "in Christ," in doing "God's work," man comes truly to hallow the name of God.

Thus it is that the Church sees the most exalted hallowing of the name of God in the holy liturgy, where our Lord continues his high-priestly action and prayer, and man may actively participate: he does "God's work" for his sanctification, he raises his voice in God's praise.—Fallen nature got back its "Head" in Christ's redemption and can join in the eternal praises of the angels, as the Psalmist declared; sun and moon praise him, the storm-winds execute his decrees, mountains and hills praise him in the silence and gloom of their forests, birds sing his praises, flowers blossom, fields and woods grow green in his honor, and even the smallest creature mirrors his beauty and displays the impeccability and sanctity of the Creator.

In all these worlds, glowing and set aglow
Dwell spirits, with unequal powers and differentiated
bodies,
But all think, God, and rejoice in God.
Hallowed be thy name!

—so we may echo the words of the poet Klopstock in one of his Odes. By celebrating the liturgy, man not only includes all these voices of the earth in his own prayer, but he joins the choirs of angels, who sing with "Alleluia" and "Holy, holy, holy" and "Amen" the eternal hymn of the heavenly liturgy to venerate and hallow God's Being. In this heavenly concord the music of the spheres has its part, too, as well as the unearthly beauty of the *Musica sacra*, the melodies with which Johann Sebastian Bach "approached the throne of God," or Mozart, or Beethoven venerating his name in his later works, or Anton Bruckner who dedicated his unfinished, last, ninth symphony "to dear God."

With participation of body and senses a *sine qua non*, the

liturgy opens the way to sanctification in daily life, where every act should bring to light some trace of God-willed order and thus hallow God's name; then this petition of the Lord's Prayer is no mere lip-service but rises from the heart and expends itself in action. The endeavor to live in God's presence is a hallowing of his name; it corresponds to a conduct of our life in which all things, however trifling, are related to God and thus acquire their touch of holiness. If life is understood like this, the familiar phrases of the old and new covenant take on a fresh vitality;—for instance, "that all things be glorified in God," or "to the greater glory of God"; or, "all to the glory of God,"—an extension in relation to daily life of the first petition of the Lord's Prayer.

In the middle ages, the close studies of Scholasticism illumined another aspect of this petition. None of the traditional teaching was rejected, of course, but gradually the stress shifted, and now that the thing of greatest importance was *learning to know*, the "Our Father" commentaries were more and more written along those lines. It was believed that the highest peak of human thought had been reached, and the whole philosophical equipment of the learned Schoolmen was brought into play to expound the Lord's Prayer. Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas wrote "Our Father" commentaries which may strike us as highly contrived, but on closer inspection they reveal unimagined riches and undreamed-of depths of understanding. It is as Bernard of Clairvaux said: "In the petition for the hallowing of his name we desire to forge ahead of ourselves and win through to understanding." Similar views are to be found in other mediaeval commentators. For these, the hallowing of God's name depends in the first instance on the *word*, that is, the spiritual possession of the truth in faith. And as everything that is in the Word is to be found in the Holy Spirit too, this petition is the equivalent of a petition for the inpouring of the Holy Spirit. "What is the hallowing of God's name other than the inpouring of the Holy Spirit?" (Paschasius Radbertus.)

When the general trend was away from liturgical prayer towards a more personal form, elucidations of the first petition of the "Our Father" were strongly marked by this tendency. Treatises were written on private prayer, supplementing the liturgy with reading, studying, and contemplative prayer. According to the doctrine of St. Thomas and a number of others, speculation and theology were necessary for its nourishment. Therefore the study of Holy Scripture and readings from religious books, with the natural sciences added in an ancillary capacity, were also adopted as a manner of hallowing God's name. Formerly it was the duty of a Christian teacher to initiate others in the contemplation of divine perfection as a way of hallowing God's name, and this came to include instruction in the divine sciences. All religious activity was drawn within the radius of the first petition; in fact all human action, whatever it might be, was related to it. The world was still—for the last time—seen as a unity, and in one mighty comprehensive view it was declared that the world exists to glorify the holy name of God, his nature, himself. With the end of the 15th century and throughout the 16th, when the new world was in process of being discovered, we come to that magnificent chapter of missionary history which is the high achievement of the Church in those decades. Ever since, the spread of the Gospel has remained one of the most urgent concerns of the Church, down to our day, when we see with our own eyes how God's name is glorified by all nations. The first and second petitions of the Lord's Prayer were henceforth to be understood in a missionary spirit too; rightly so, for the spread of the Gospel in word and deed, in preaching and baptism, means the expansion of the work of the Redeemer through which God's name is hallowed. And fighting for the true and pure doctrine of Christ was declared to be a hallowing of God's name, whether it consisted in proclaiming the Gospel through the word, confessing it under persecution, or dying for it as Christ's witnesses. And the missionary element in the two first petitions gains enormously in sig-

nificance for us, too, when we think of the challenge in the words France—mission land, Germany—mission land. May God's name be hallowed again, not only in those two lands but in all Europe, whose cathedrals were built to his honor and glory, whose universities were founded in the name of the most holy and indivisible Trinity, whose kings and emperors issued their decrees in the name of the Lord. We are not indulging in romantic dreams nor escaping back into the middle ages when we declare that for us salvation is to be found in the one name only.

No Christian can say "Europe" without remembering the division which had its roots in Europe and tore Christianity apart and still tears it apart. Constantinople, Wittenberg, Geneva, Canterbury: what do those names signify! A protestant commentator of our day, Thielicke, wrote at the head of his book: The prayer that encompasses the world. Would that we could see this come true. How good it would be if we could pray "Our Father" together before the Eucharistic altar which alone gives unity authenticity;—if all Christians would hallow the name of the Father in the common faith, in the one hope, in all-embracing love: the name that Jesus made known to those whom the Father entrusted to him, chosen out of the world. "Holy Father," he prayed in his farewell prayer, "keep them true to thy name, thy gift to me, that they may be one, as we are one" (John 17:6, 11).

Praised, worshiped and most glorious is thy all-holy name, the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and forever and in all eternity. Amen.

ST. JAMES' LITURGY

Let us hearken to his holy and glorious name, in which we hope, trusting in his revered, majestical name. For he it was who called us from darkness into light, from ignorance to knowledge of the glory of his name.

CLEMENT OF ROME

God is greater than all earthly names and that is why he is nameless. It is good and right to describe him as the Spirit that embraces all things. But he is not like the human spirit. Very rightly he is described as light, but he is in no wise like the light that is familiar to us. And so in all other things the Father is not at all to be compared to human paltriness. He is indeed called after these things in regard to his love, but he is felt to be far above them in regard to his majesty.

This God is glorified by his Word, which is his eternal Son, and by the Holy Spirit, which is the Wisdom of the Father of all. And the powers of Word and Wisdom, which bear the name of Cherubim and Seraphim, praise God with ceaseless hymns of praise; and every created being in heaven offers praise to God the Father of all. He gave shape to the whole world through his Word—and angels belong to this world too—and for the whole world he laid down laws; to every species of being he ascribed its own sphere with God-given bounds it dare not overstep. Thus every being brings its own allotted task to perfection.

IRENAEUS OF LYON

The name "God the Father" is revealed to us in the Son. For "Son" is already a new way of naming the Father. "I came," he said, "in the Father's name," and again: "Father, glorify thy name," and still more clearly, "I have made known thy name to men."

It is not seemly that we men should wish God good, as though one existed who could influence God, or as though he were in need and dependent on our wishes. Of course it is seemly for God to be praised in all places and at all times by all men, for we must always remember benefits received; and this petition serves for praise, too. But is there any time when God's name is not in itself holy and hallowed? The name which indeed hallows all others by means of itself. . . . The angels who surround him call without ceasing: Holy, holy, holy. So already here on earth we learn the angels' hymn of praise to God and our own angelic service in future glory.

TERTULLIAN

When we sometimes accord him less perfectly applicable names and call him the One, the Good, or Spirit, or Being, or Father, God, Creator, Lord, we do not do it as though this were his most

intimate name, but rather, having no name ready, we seize upon as beautiful descriptive terms as possible in order to give our thoughts a prop to lean upon.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

Through this petition the nature of God is distinguished from all creatures.—God is supreme Being. Only a few grasp his all-inclusive holiness.

The name of the Lord cannot be invoked if Christ is not first believed in.

ORIGEN

As soon as a man believes in God's name and becomes a son of God, he must begin his thanksgiving and openly confess to being a son of God.

CYPRIAN OF CARTHAGE

To conceive or express his majesty exceeds all the art of language and all understanding. For he is loftier than reason itself, and thought cannot grasp his greatness. Were thought able to reach him, he would be less than human understanding. He is loftier than every word; he eludes all modes of expression. Everything he conceived is less than himself, and all the speech of man is small compared to him. In silence we can have a surmise of him; but how he is in himself we cannot express in any word.—All kinds of power are necessarily less than he is, who is God and Father of all power. It may truly be said: God is such that nothing can be compared to him. He is above all that can be spoken.

NOVATIANUS

To Moses he revealed his name when he called himself I AM. This is his essential name; never at any time did he call any other being by this name.

The two names (Father and Son) came like two beacons. They scattered the darkness that concealed the difference between them. You learn to know the Father through his name and likewise the Only-Begotten by what he is called. You heard "Father"—that is enough for you! And the name "Son" is sufficient for you too. There is no face here for you to be taught from the features of it. The names serve as faces, through their names they are to be distinguished. In the same way we get to know people at a great distance

by their names. In the stead of the different face comes the name near at hand. The sound flares up in the place of the light, and hearing represents the eye. The ear draws the names near and distinguishes them like distinct figures.

Praised be him who fettered the herd to his praised name!
Praised be him with whose name we are clothed.
Praised be the name to which the Church is bound.
Praised be the name after which we are called.
Praised be him who gave us his name.
Praised be the name with which we are adorned.
Praised be the name we confess.

EPHRAIM THE SYRIAN

To praise God we find nothing more appropriate than to call him holy.

AMBROSE

You seek a suitable name for God? You find one; you seek somehow to name him, and you find all. Hallowed be thy name. This is not prayed as though God's name were not holy, but in order that it be hallowed. That means, May God be known to them, so that they hold nothing for holier, and fear nothing more than that they could offend him. Thus it is written in the Psalm (75:1): "God is known in Judah, in Israel great is his name." It is not to be understood as though it were small here and great there, but: his name is great wherever it is invoked on account of the greatness of its majesty. And his name will be hallowed wherever it is named with honor and reverence.

Once we were not holy and we became hallowed through his name. But he and his name are always holy.

When you pray: "Hallowed be thy name," do you not pray as though for him and not as though for yourself? Try to understand! You pray for yourself too. You pray in fact that he who is ever holy in himself, be hallowed in you.

AUGUSTINE

God is sufficient unto himself and in himself wholly perfect. Indeed out of his fullness he endows the creature with holiness. The phrase: "Hallowed be thy name" means: in us may thy name be holy. And the petitioners do not pray for themselves alone but

for the whole world. When the light of truth lights up and shines upon them and when they are thus awakened out of a dark night, they will recognize him for what he is and how great he is, and, then they will laud him as the Holiest of Holies.

CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA

Because as a Cristian you bear the name of Christ, you must pray that this name be hallowed and honored in you through your behavior.

PETER CHRYSOLOGUS

As the dignity of the Father applies to the Son, so the hallowing of the sons is ascribed to his name. But what is the hallowing of the name of God other than the inpouring of the Holy Spirit? For his welcome and with his help we prepare a devout heart within ourselves, mild and well-disposed, pure and equipped with every virtue. Through his incoming our adoption as child is hallowed in freedom.

PASCHASIUS RADBERTUS

The name and glory of the Father is Christ.

JOCELYN OF SOISSONS

The true name of God is none other than the essence of his Godhead. Before men acknowledged it in faith, very few hallowed it. Not that it was not holy in itself, but people did not believe it to be holy.

GUNTHER OF PARIS

To hallow the name of God is to be chosen out from among the heathen and gathered together from the four corners of the earth as Christ's faithful and baptized unto the forgiveness of sins. Such hallowing (through baptism) is the true hallowing of God's name.—And in order that this hallowing should flow out over many men, Christ first hallowed himself in the baptism by which he was baptized in dying, as had been foretold. Through that baptism, O God our Father, thy name was hallowed, for we have been made holy through the pouring of blood and water from his side. Thus, when we say, "Hallowed be thy name," it means the same as, May the heathen be converted and may they obtain forgiveness of sins through thy name.—And all prayers which we pray for baptismal

candidates or for the unbelieving Jews and heathen, that they may be converted to the true and living God and his only Son Jesus Christ, our Lord, are included in the petition, "Hallowed be thy name."

RUPERT OF DEUTZ

Thy name, O Lord, from all eternity the holiest, be hallowed, so that all we see and hear and perceive and feel, may be ordered according to thy holy name, so that thy name be kept pure and holy within us, and we, being free and clear of all idle curiosity, vanity and worthless fancies, may acknowledge thee in all things; so that we ceaselessly direct the eyes of our spirit towards thee, the eternal light, and ever desire to behold thee, *who art*. O sweet light, O happy eyes who never turn their spirit's gaze away from thee, the Sun of Justice! How dear and pleasant, how admirable is the brightness of thy light in our eyes! So may thy name be hallowed.

BONAVENTURA

God hallows his name in us when he takes unclean thoughts, words, and deeds away from us through grace and penance, so that nothing remain in us but what we have from the Father. . . .

The unclean son, who follows the unclean ways of the flesh, blasphemes the name of our pure and holy Father. This is what the Prodigal Son did, who used up his whole patrimony living in dissipation with light women. It is principally such sins of impurity of the flesh that are contrary to the holiness and purity inborn in us from the Father. Through our Father's holiness we must be holy too. "Such capacity has it that it can pervade the minds of all living men" (Wis. 7:24).

Just as the son has what he inherits from his father inborn in him, that which is physically part of his father, so must the purity, the holiness of our spiritual Father be inborn in us from our spiritual Father, so that we not only bear his image in us, but also the purity of his holiness, and can be named after it: "He has chosen us out, before the foundation of the world to be saints, to be blameless in his sight" (Eph. 1:4).

Sanctification is the same as Confirmation. It too is a two-fold process: through inscription, that it may not be effaced, and through imprinting in the memory, so that it may not fade from the mind through forgetfulness. . . . Inscribing is done on brow,

heart and clothing. . . . The name of God is inscribed on the brow through the public confession of the way of salvation; on the heart through a pure delight in the name of the Lord; on clothing by virtue of a sincere conversion. Thus it is written: "I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city my God has built, that new Jerusalem, which my God is now sending down from heaven. . . ." The name of the heavenly city is imprinted in us, when our deeds are done after the example of the angels, so that the likeness of heaven is seen in us. The name of new son will be inscribed in us when the special works of the Son shine out from our own deeds, such as chastity; teaching the Word by perfection of practice, steadfastness of witness even in enduring deadly dangers. . . . The name thus inscribed is holy and ineffaceable.

ALBERT THE GREAT

All whom faith has not yet reached still despise the name of God; but when the brightness of truth enlightens them, they recognize him as the Holy One of the saints. And as the glory of God the Father is in those who belong to Jesus, so will the name of the Father be hallowed when they have come to know Christ.

THOMAS AQUINAS

The name of the Father is the image of the Father, his reflection and his infinite immutability. He (Christ) let us know that this name, eternal wisdom, should be hallowed. This is done when it is poured into us by the Father, a spiritual process; for it is hallowed when we feel its influence; our reason comes back home to eternal wisdom, and then we begin ourselves to see it as a spiritual process. And there is nothing that reason could better praise, laud and hallow than eternal Wisdom. Pure reason cannot prefer anything to God's Wisdom and his Word, just as the eye cannot prefer anything to beauty.

So Christ teaches us to pray that this name be held in honor by us. It contains a mysterious initiation into the way to acknowledge God: for we cannot do it on our own account, but only through God's grace, which makes us holy; thus we may glorify the name imparting a knowledge of God that is beyond all knowledge. And when our reason glorifies God's name alone and finds and seeks repose in no other being, then man possesses what he prays God for in the words: Hallowed be thy name.

NICHOLAS OF CUES

In the first petition of the "Our Father" a spring comes to light; a word is born which we call "name," by way of definition; but this definition stands for divine majesty, wisdom, loving-kindness, and other things that man is not good at expressing. After this glimpse of the divine essence, the suppliant will be heartened by yet more wonderful splendors, whereby the name of God will be hallowed in him. He often reflects on this name and praises it greatly. And through contemplation of the divine nature, he recognizes that he himself is nothing. And if he looks upon God's infinite might, he sees his own frailty; if he considers God's wonderful wisdom, he sees his own darkness. If he tastes God's goodness, he knows himself as a sinner. On this account man should not be overbearing, but seek to praise the Lord in all things and say with the Holy Virgin: "My soul doth magnify the Lord and my spirit doth rejoice in God, my Savior."

SAVONAROLA

Hallowed be thy name means, hallow us through our work too, so that the world may see thy holiness upon us.

GEORGE WICELIUS

Hallowed be thy name means, that at all times we would like to give thanks to thee through thy dear Son.

JOHN GROPPER

The first and greatest thing to be rightly desired is that God be acknowledged, honored, feared and properly served. Then he is to be loved whole-heartedly. Therefore it is highly desirable that he be praised by us. For he himself desires nothing, for all things are his own.

PETER DE SOTO

Ah, Father, to whom honor is due, it is lamentable that among thy children some are to be found who dishonor and disgrace thy most highly revered name, through false, godless doctrine or else through a disgraceful mode of life and blasphemous speech. Dear Father, let us in all things hallow thy name, and acknowledge, love and praise it. Thy name and thy honor shall be to us as honey in the mouth, as sweet singing in our ear, heartfelt joy and devoutness of soul. Not our name but thine, thy truth and goodness, thy praise and thy honor be acknowledged and held in honor. May

they be candidly sought and promoted in all our conversation and intentions, in our general behavior in all places, at all times, among all peoples.

PETER CANISIUS

In this petition we desire two things: first, the spread and acknowledgement of the divine name among all pagans and all nations under the sun, so that from sunrise to sunset, from midday to midnight his name may be great among all races and tongues, through acceptance of the Christian faith and the holy Gospel. Secondly, that all who are already Christians and have received Christian baptism may let the light of their conduct shine out before men, so that they may see their good works and glorify their Father in heaven, as Christ said, and the chief of the apostles, Peter, wrote: "Your life amidst the gentiles must be beyond reproach; decried as malefactors, you must let them see, from your honorable behavior, what you are; they will praise God for you, when his time comes to have mercy on them" (I Pet. 2:12).

Truly, where this does not occur, the name of God is not hallowed but blasphemed among the heathen, on the Christians' account. Many pray "hallowed be thy name" and at the same time lead an unholy life. That is not right. We ought not only to pray with our lips that God's name be hallowed, but by deed and work let such hallowing appear in our conduct.

GEORGE SCHERER

One can name the highest God by every name,
Or, still more simply, give him none at all.

ANGELUS SILESIUS

This worshipful name is thy divine essence, for thou dost call thyself I AM THAT I AM. Herein lie thy infinite perfections, herein lies all that thou art. And that all thou art be paid due reverence, in purest, holiest, most God-fearing worship,—may the whole universe acknowledge thee, glorify thee, adore thee!

BOURDALOUE

Dare I say thee aloud?
Am I worthy to name thee?
I, the least of the works of thy hand?
Let what is high bow down, even the highest:

Glory be to thee and to thee alone,
 Most loving-kind, most wise;
 Revealed, mysterious One,
 First Beginning, without end,
 Creator, Protector, Guardian!
 May the earth itself
 Sink down in speechless worship:
Hallowed by thy name!

FRANZ GRILLPARZER

Indeed, man, you should bow down before God and do all in your power for the hallowing of his name. Who can count the bells on every Sunday, the million bells which ring out over the earth and call Christians together: all are summoned to come into the many temples and churches and chapels and pray to their heavenly Father there together, pray to dear God, the great almighty Creator of heaven and earth. Then the organ booms out its mighty sounds, the singing soars up powerfully through roof and walls, and countless crowds kneel before the Lord, fold their hands in his presence and hear his precious Word; they give thanks, are contrite, pray, promise and worship, and his name is hallowed on earth as it is in heaven. . . .

On the other hand, enter certain churches and see what is going on there. Does it not sometimes look as though Sunday and the church were not for the hallowing of Gods' name, but for its dishonoring? In some churches, the local authorities, mayor and corporation, leave their seats empty; they have so much business on hand, so many council meetings, there is no time to attend to religion; and they are doing too well on earth to have any great desire for heaven or any particular interest in God.—Moreover, if you could look into the hearts of many men and women in church, what would you find? You would find something like an old cheese squirming with little maggots, with all sorts of ideas, worries, schemes, popping in and out of their minds, all to do with property, possessions, housekeeping cares; and fervent prayers are put up for calf, cow, dung-heap and field; many of them stink of pride, envy and stale, year-old grudges. So much for incense, myrrh and sweet-smelling sacrifice!—Or take a look at the girls, how they have adorned their bodies as though they themselves were the altar, one glancing at the other to see what she is wearing; and when one has a new bit of clothing hung about her, good gracious,

what a gaping goes on, and many of them cannot keep it to themselves till church is over, but must exchange their envious remarks and biting comments inside God's house. So many of them make their devotions in church over the bib and kerchief of another and over a new hair comb, and at home they have far more to tell about these than about the sermon; and God is far away from the hearts of many. . . .

Well, I will let Sunday be, and say once more: "Hallowed be thy name." For that is not a prayer for Sunday alone but is appropriate for every day and every hour, and is valid up in heaven and down on earth everywhere. Stop a moment when you see a crowd of boys playing on the street and listen to them. If it is in Unterland, in Bruhrain for instance, you will hear at every instant, with or without anger, how they shout, "Lord God." And in Breisgau there are small boys, when they are playing or whatever they are up to, who cannot say a word without adding "by God!" And "Lord God" in the lowlands and "by God" in the uplands in the mouths of children is a bad manner of speech and a bad sign and has heavy reproach for the parents in it. And when one thinks, too, of the blasphemous oaths from so many thousand foul-mouthed citizens and village-folk in all parts of the land, and how these people shout and bawl out God's great name in so sinful a manner, and when one thinks that most of these people on the other hand do each day hold their hands together and pray: Hallowed be thy name, and much else, because they were so taught and are used to doing it, and say the ten commandments too, where it is written, Thou shalt not take the name of God, thy Lord, in vain, then it is a matter for great astonishment how such contradictory words venture to issue from out of the same body and the same soul.

ALBAN STOLZ

Christians are still, as in the Pauline age, distinguished by the fact that they call upon the name of Lord Jesus. They like to bear the name of God's Son, they have accepted the name of God's Son, have learned to know it, were named after it. They live and die for this name, they acknowledge it. . . . Bad Christians deny the name, heretics use it with evil malice.

The name means the community of Christians. Everyone who comes in the name of the Lord is to be welcomed by the community. The name is the centerpoint of Christian preaching. Philip

preached the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ to the Samaritans. The speaking and preaching of the apostles is based on this name. The Christian faith is summed up in faith in the name of God's Son. . . . In the so-called High Priest's prayer, Jesus prayed: Keep them true to thy name, thy gift to me" (John 17:11). Just as the old covenant was held together and its belief in God assured by the holy name of Jahve—so is the cohesion of the new religious community governed by the name of Jesus. It is in this sense that the Father gave the Son his name. And that is what is meant when the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of him as being as "superior to the angels in that measure in which the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs." Still more clearly, in the Epistle to the Ephesians, we read that Christ was raised to the right hand of God above the heavens, high above all principedoms, powers and virtues and dominations and every name that is known (which means honored in divine service), not in this world only, but in the world to come.

Thus the Church rests upon this name. "The tower is founded on the word of the almighty and glorious *name*, and it is held up by the invisible power of the Lord." "The name of the Son of God is great and beyond our grasp, and bears up the whole world" (Hermas). . . .

At the beginning of Christian life is baptism. It is still quite essentially baptism in the name of the Lord, as in the Pauline age. In the Acts of the Apostles there are a number of passages witnessing to this formula; the Didache, which next to St. Matthew's Gospel is the oldest source in which the trinitarian baptismal formula is found, mentions still quite simply, in its commentaries on the Eucharist, all "who are baptized in the name of the Lord." More exactly, it is said that baptism occurs by invoking the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. "Rise up, and receive baptism, washing away thy sins at the invocation of his name" (Acts). . . .

Indeed, it may be because of this custom of naming of Jesus' name that baptism was called a "seal" (Sphragis). The naming of the name is probably only a weakened sacramental form for the original, more robust custom of actually printing or ingrainig the sign (name, symbol) of his God on the person being consecrated. . . .

In the "Shepherd of Hermas" it is expressly stated: "Before a man bears the *name* of the Son of God, he is dead; when he has received the *seal* he puts off his mortality and receives life." Here

the parallel, name—seal, is quite evident. The definition of baptism as a seal depends on the naming of the name.

WILLIAM BOUSSET

Hallowed be thy name. So does a Christian pray as God's child, as king and priest of creation, and he sums up in these words the whole wordless worship of the universe, the sound of the seas and the rushing of rivers and winds, the murmur of forests and the lofty silence of the peaks. The songs of the bird-world and the sweet scent of flowers, together with the harmonious spheres of the starry regions—are all one act of adoration which he expresses in those inspired words, presenting them to the heavenly Father.

VON KEPPLER

Hallowed be thy name means:

May God be acknowledged and held in high reverence by all people. . . May God lead mankind to the point where it will not disregard or profane his most holy Being any more. Hallowed be thy name means: may thy scheme of redemption be completed! When we say this petition, we recognize that we are bound to cooperate if the goal is to be reached. That means that the petition is not restricted only to the religious sphere of life.

ALBERT EHRHARD

To hallow means to transform whatever comes into a new "holy" occasion conformable to God.

The ultimate end is not to hallow the world through God, but God through the world. And world and man are only moments in the process of sanctification by which God hallows himself. And this process issues from a hidden holiness and leads over creation and perfection to his manifest glory.

The hallowing of the name is an unique occurrence. And this unique occurrence is God's doing—otherwise it would not be prayed for—even if incidentally it may remain an open question whether the person praying also has a part in this act of God's. What is intended is, that eschatological act through which God hallows his name before and in and beyond all the world, the name which is at once Beginning and End of all eschatological events.

The name of God should be "hallowed." For what is holy is ultimate. There is no possible retreat from it. One can only be

aware of it, and assent to it and adopt it, or else defend oneself against it. The name of God is holy: it is the special nature of his aliveness that is intended here: what is proper to him alone, and strange, remote; mysterious, familiar; homegiving; or whatever other terms we may find to indicate his utmost being: simple and inexpressible; infinitely applicable; that is what we are to "hallow." There should come to life in us an attitude of mind with a bias for what is holy, responding to it as to its true source of origin. May this deep, tender, heartfelt, powerful feeling cherish the name of God within us. . . .

What Christianity means is now clear. The second of the ten commandments made it man's duty not to take the name of God in vain. It was a law, and the people who received this law were educated by God in accordance with it. Then Christ came, and the new thing that then occurred is evident in the "Our Father" petition. . . . Once more, as in the law, we are concerned with the holiness of God's name; but this time God does not express what he wants in terms of law, but he confides it to man as a concern for what is high and holy, and thus man is called into God's own counsels.

ROMANO GUARDINI

God has a name. The misery of this world is nameless, wickedness among men is nameless; for the darkness loves what has no name. The devil loves anonymity; but God has a name. God makes his name known, not only, as would be comprehensible, to angels and the blessed of heaven, but God has decided to give his name on earth and has even granted us permission to use it.

The first petition of the "Our Father" corresponds to the first of the Ten Commandments, which proclaims that God is one God and there is no other God beside him. And it also harmonizes with the first Beatitude, about the poor in spirit, that is, people who can no longer vaunt themselves before God. Face to face with God's name, such as we can only be poor. Thus, one comes to see why God's name occurs not only in a commandment but in a prayer too.

We are baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. It is a holy name, not a misused and abused one, which is laid upon us in baptism. There we are admitted into the holiness of his name, and enveloped in it. That is how Christ lets us participate in the fulfilling of this petition.

To take baptism seriously means simply that the holiness of the divine name leaves us nevermore, and we cannot but honor God.

WALTER LÜTHY

In the first petition of the "Our Father" our Savior is concerned with the tremendous fact that God and man associate in a communion in which God the holy is reflected in the holiness of man.

When does that take place?—When Jesus teaches us to pray, "Hallowed be thy name," he is clearly thinking of that name of God which he uttered at the beginning: Father. So the petition, hallowed be the name of Father, God's fatherly name, has a two-fold meaning: praying, first, that God will act as Sanctifier of his own name of Father, and secondly that man may stand the test as sanctifier of God's name.

How are these two things to happen? On God's part, when the Father wins children to himself in his divine Son, by accepting men into his communion through Christ, where they compose his family; and on man's part, when through faith in Christ, through life in Christ and with Christ, he makes known the nature of the Father's Son, and thus glorifies the Father. The hallowing of God's fatherly name therefore consists in life as adopted sons, which is the life men lead in Christ. That is the meaning of this petition of the "Our Father."

THADDÄUS SOIRON

Is not the great scandal of Christian history the fact that the divine name is no sooner mentioned than it is profaned, because we claim to know God and deny him at the same time?

ADOLF SCHLATTER

The name of God is not a word among other words, the name of God designates his Essence. Where his name is, there is he; and calling him by his name and invoking it, we can come to him; for by giving his name to be reverently invoked, he gave us admittance to himself, he is continually on the way to us. This name of God is entrusted to man to venerate, and God had to command that his name be not taken in vain. In the "Our Father" we pray, first that God may have his name known as holy among men, and kept holy by them; and in this petition we are concerned that God's name find a worthy place in the heart of man; and we share this concern with God himself. When a man has this concern for

God's holy name, it will be an active, transforming, healing power within him; when concern for the sanctity of God's name is his first and foremost concern, then he will be holy and perfect like his Father in heaven; for the name of God which the Son made known to us is, Father.

ALFONS HEITZ

Man alone of all earthly creatures has the power truly to give glory to God or to refuse; he alone, in free cooperative-creative activity, works at his own shaping, or at his own distortion and misshaping; his human spirit alone is able to bless or curse his God. Thus freely given, the petition "hallowed be thy name" is a gift of man to God, and God naturally gains nothing from it in his actual glory, but will doubtless find fatherly joy in every accretion to his glory from outside, or outwards. . . . Whoever confesses to being a Christian is responsible not only for his own honor but for God's too.

HUGO LANG

What is the name of the Father, of almighty God? I AM THAT I AM. God not only created the world in the beginning, enthroned above it, but he lives on today in all its individual forms too, in stone and plant, beast and man. All make known his holy name and in all God's name should be hallowed. Hallowing God's name is the function not of a special sphere of life, the religious sphere, but of the conduct of life as such.

Hallowed be thy name. That is done not only when we use the words God, Father, Christ, and so on, only and always reverently, but we ought to consider reverently and treat reverently everything that is, everything that lives, everything that comes from God, everything that lives of God.

It is not only God's name that we can honor, but the name of the evil one, or our own, too. True, this is no hallowing but a desecration, and as hallowing goes the way to eternal life, so does desecrating go the way to eternal death.

BERNARD MARTIN

Great reverence should be paid to the name of God—the name mentioned in the petition. Glorifying God, showing reverence and veneration to him: I have reckoned these among the fundamental categories of life, and now it is a matter of realizing them:

that God's name be the great and holy thing it is, imposing speechless silence and humble restraint. Man should not only believe inwardly in the meaning of his life. He should give witness to this belief in practical performance in life, he should place everything under the law of sanctification and leave alone what is not compatible with it. God, as the great veneration of his life, will be his very life. "Salvation is not to be found elsewhere." But what a lot is lacking here. And in our religiosity so much is lacking too. We have so much piety with no properly performed reverence for God. No religious chastity or austere keeping of silence.

Worship is the way to freedom and teaching people to worship is the most wholesome service to mankind, it makes possible an order of things in which temple and altar stand where they ought to stand, and in which reality bows down to God once more and accounts it a great responsibility to be responsible for God's name.

ALFRED DELP

THY KINGDOM COME

The second petition of the Lord's Prayer is the one with the widest span. Not that it is the most important, for all seven are equally important, just as each includes all the others. But the very fact that sometimes the whole prayer is called after this petition justifies the special attention given it. It contains temporal and eternal matters, earthly and heavenly, microcosm and macrocosm, mystery and revelation, peace and conflict, sovereignty and service, community and individuality, all garnered together in the one dimension "Kingdom," "Kingdom of God," Kingdom of Heaven." This dimension is only apprehensible for short moments. It is perpetually being realized, but, for us time-bound men, not yet completed, never fully accomplished; ever the goal of hope, just as the first petition is an act of faith.

Together with glorifying God the Father and his holy name, preaching God's kingdom was a most important element of Jesus' mission. News of the kingdom of God is indeed most properly Gospel, Evangelium. God's kingdom means his infinite sovereignty, it means victory over all powers inimical to God; it is "love, joy, peace" (Gal. 5:22), it is freedom and rejoicing on all God's highways, it is power and dignity, order and accomplishment. Kingdom of God is "God all in all" (I Cor. 15:28), eternal and never-ending praise and thanksgiving of a ransomed and sanctified creation, before the throne of him who was and is and shall be, and before the Lamb, the supreme Lord. Kingdom of God is the valid Amen and "Yes" of the Father to all his creation. In God's kingdom, creation is safeguarded and completed: a new heaven and a new earth as the sphere of God's rule, with no boundaries, no strife: an eternal and all-embracing kingdom, a kingdom of truth and life, a kingdom of holiness and grace, a kingdom of justice, love and peace.

Over and over again our Lord preached the kingdom of his Father. He told what it is like in graphic symbols and parables and commanded his disciples to seek first and alone the kingdom of God, before striving for another form of salvation and, above all, before beginning to think of the sustenance necessary for their bodily existence. He said the kingdom was already there, and another time announced its coming very mysteriously. On occasions he promised it for the remote future and described it as a condition of blessedness, something that only the "Blessed of the Father" would possess. He gave his disciples to understand that he would sit at table with them, and eat and drink wine, and would continually refresh them with his presence and his words. Again, in other passages, the Gospel ascribes the possession of the kingdom to the poor and little ones, those who are free from earthly concerns and do not burden themselves with the transient things of this world, for, as the Lord taught, "The Kingdom of God cannot be enjoyed by flesh and blood." It does not consist in "eating and drinking"; for a camel can more easily go through the eye of a needle than a rich man to heaven. All these expressions point to the spiritual greatness of God's kingdom. Although it does not consist in "outward pomp," it is based on solid earth, and is mainly among men and in human communities. Nonetheless, man and world stand out as counterpoles to the kingdom, which is liable to "suffer violence" through worldly power. The prince of this world throws his armies against it. The stage for the confrontation of God's kingdom with the kingdom of this world, or Satan's kingdom, is History.

In every man, even in the apparently most perfect, there lurks a vague sense of longing, a "pull upwards," an "urge to devote himself to something higher," or whatever it may be called. Moreover, man is gifted with the knowledge that nothing finite can perfect itself by its own endeavors. For the created spirit the fulfillment of this longing implies a return to its Creator, to immediate vision of God, which includes participa-

tion in divine love. And the fulfillment of this longing to rise above our own imperfection is offered us by God through Christ, in the revelation of God's kingdom. Whoever enters God's kingdom, whoever accepts its graces, is no longer a prey to the all too stormy restlessness of striving for perfection; nor is that nostalgic resignation necessary, putting up an appearance of serenity like the pagan philosophers. For perfection is really possible, it has even made a beginning. That is what we know about God's kingdom.

Whatever leads to this goal—God's decision to let us participate in his kingdom, the vocation to it through our membership in Christ's Body, and, ultimately, attainment to the bliss of vision—is the work of God's freely-given love, is loving condescension, is in one great word: grace of God towards man. He can accept, he can refuse, God gave him the freedom to do either. So God's kingdom is dependent on his grace and our faith.

God's boundless sovereignty of rule and the annihilation of evil is not yet wholly completed, although it had its beginning in the victory of Christ over the devil on the cross and in our Lord's resurrection. But we are still threatened men, menaced by the old serpent, and thus our hold on the kingdom is uncertain. To be called is not yet to be chosen.

The manifold and many-faceted sayings of Jesus about the kingdom of God are all included in the person of the God-Man. He is himself the kingdom of God. In him, as in the heavenly kingdom, there are hidden things and things revealed: he came into our history, he comes in the mysteries of the Church, he will come at the end of time in the fullness of his might, apparent to the whole world, and take over his rule for all eternity. He is peace and blessedness, and he confronts us with decisions and brings conflict. He is a unique, indivisible Person, and his spiritual body is a communion of many.

"The second petition of the 'Our Father' means the reign of Christ," as a spiritual teacher said. As, in an earthly kingdom,

might and right are represented in the person of the king, so is God's kingdom in its King, Jesus Christ. He came into the world in obscurity, clad in the humble form of mortal man. His cradle was not in the royal house where the throne of his father David stood. Nonetheless he revealed himself as King of the world immediately on his appearance in it. The miraculous virgin birth testified to his divine origin; angels appeared to the shepherds in the fields; the star shone forth; the wise men from the east worshipped the King whom the liturgy celebrates in its chants: "The Lord reigns as king; let earth be glad of it."—"The glory of the Lord has broken upon thee."—"See he comes, our Lord and Ruler, armed with royal power and dominion."—In his birth he was shown to be King, both mysteriously and patently, and his earthly life was the same. He healed the sick, drove out devils, brought the dead back to life, forgave sins and lit up the darkness of disbelief. As Pope Innocent III said, "Christ is called the kingdom of God after the text: if, when I cast out devils, I do it through God's power, then it must be that the kingdom of God has suddenly appeared among you." His kingdom is not only valid historically, it is not just a special concession such as earthly princes are able to accord, but full divine power is incorporated in Christ who possesses all power in heaven and earth. And with power he combines abundance of wisdom and virtue such as no ruler could possess either before or after him. "All treasures of wisdom and learning are contained in him." Christ claims royal rights over mankind not only as God's Son, he won them, too, through the obedience of his death on the cross. Shortly before he died he admitted to Pilate that he was a king, and because of his death his Father raised him up and gave him the name of "Kyrios," "Lord," before whose majesty every knee shall bow. In the cross, too, the liturgy honors Christ's royal power; it is indeed, in a unique way, the instrument of his rule over the whole world and the beginning of his reign. It is his royal throne with the purple banner over it. As the place of sacrifice of the Lamb, the cross

becomes the altar of the liturgy, with the King's subjects all around it, paying prayerful homage to their sovereign, saying: "Thou alone art the Holy One. Thou alone art Lord. Thou, Jesus Christ, alone art the Most High."

What Christ is by his very nature, he imparted to man, on behalf of whom he became Man. Therefore a great many "Our Father" commentaries understand the petition in this sense: May God establish his reign in man, may grace drive out the evil in him, may love, justice and the knowledge of God take root in him, grow and dominate him entirely, and God's love stream out in neighborly love to his fellow men. God, who did not create man as a single individual but intended him for life in community and ransomed him as such, bestowed his Kingdom on humanity as well. Christ bound together the men and women, apostles and disciples who accepted his teaching, in a community, forming the living supernatural communion of his Church, which is an image of the coming kingdom of God. This divine kingdom of the Church is foreshadowed in the divine kingship of the Old Covenant, which prophetic vision saw growing over into eternity. A visible sign of this Old-Testament kingdom was the Ark of the Covenant in the Temple of Jerusalem. Thus Jesus' proclamation of the coming of the kingdom was nothing new for the Jews. The whole of what Israel expected of the future is summed up in the idea of God's sovereignty. So much the greater was the Jews' disappointment when they heard more and more—but did not grasp—that for Jesus, the prophets' magnificent descriptions of the splendor and glory of God's rule, were to be understood in a spiritual sense, whereas they took them literally. Their rejection of Jesus was largely due to their ingrained material and political view of God's kingdom, which they took to be an earthly extension and expansion of their covenant with Jahve. Thus, many Jews closed their minds to the new, spiritual thing our Lord was proclaiming, and a great part of their guilt consists in the fact that

they could not adjust their ideas and proved to be incapable of accepting the Kingdom of God "like children."

The heir of God's Kingdom was the Church of Christ. Her spiritual nature is revealed to her in the picture of the holy city of God and the Covenant, the new Jerusalem as St. John beheld it in the Apocalypse. The symbolism of the equation, "God's Kingdom: City," was one which was comprehensible to Gentile Christians too, for their cities were *Poleis*, city-states. The theologians commenting on the second petition of the "Our Father" declare that the Church is the new Jerusalem, the Kingdom of God. But the Church is not identical with God's Kingdom. The Kingdom goes further: it belongs to the future, is eschatological. This is clear from the closing petition after the celebration of the Eucharist as handed down in the "Didache": "May thy Church be brought together from the ends of the earth into thy kingdom."—But in this present age the Church is the visible kingdom of God on earth. She will inherit the coming kingdom and to her Sovereign Head are entrusted the keys of the heavenly kingdom. By spreading the Gospel and caring for the children of the kingdom, she brings about the expansion of God's kingdom, she is its representative in time and the world, she safeguards it from the attacks of false teaching. She prepares the coming of the eternal kingdom of God and holds watch till her Lord comes.

The middle ages in particular were much concerned about the function of the Church as image of God's kingdom. Even the secular power of that time, the "Christ-loving emperor" is herald and champion of the "invincible King," and "imperial favor" was meant to be based on Christ's example; its function was assisting and safeguarding and spreading God's kingdom. These ideas turn up here and there in "Our Father" commentaries (Albert the Great), exalting Justice as the shining token of God's sovereignty; the kingdom petition is often given the character of a mission petition, too.

When, in later times, renaissance, reformation, aufklärung, revolution, nationalism and socialism shattered the idea of a universal Christian culture, the attacks on the essential character of the Church imperiled God's kingdom as well. Then the second petition of the "Our Father" shone out again as a challenge to men to participate actively in penetrating public life with Christian truths. Papal Encyclicals on Christ's kingdom instruct us to pray for the coming of the kingdom, for the renewal of the face of the earth depends on the degree to which Christ's kingdom is realized. Thus, to pray for the coming of the kingdom means, may God exert his rule in political, social and economic life and in science and the arts too. The universal authority of the Church, the charge laid on all baptized, priests and laity, has its origin here. The Church is again to testify to God's sovereignty, God's comprehensive rule, before all the world, and make itself felt in all departments of public life. This is not equivalent to deliberate secularization of the life of the Church, although the danger is present. Nonetheless, the aim of all the Church's activity is ultimately, and always, man's salvation: a supernatural aim, just as the kingdom of God itself belongs to the supernatural order. As such, it never comes to perfection in this world, and awareness of this has prevented the eschatological trend of the second "Our Father" petition from ever being lost sight of.

The persecuted early Church knew, as we men of today do, after the catastrophe of two world wars, that God's kingdom does not have unlimited sovereignty in this world, but that Satan and the demons are interfering the whole time. The coming of God's kingdom is also judgment, it is the revealing of God's sovereignty, it is a severing of evil from good, dark from light, the genuine from the spurious. This rings out again and again in the various texts: God's kingdom is the glory of paradise; God's kingdom is eternal blessedness; God's kingdom is the condition of things when they all radiate God. May this kingdom come, not only to me, but to all men and to all cre-

atures too, who groan awaiting their ransom with us, whose representative we are when we pray, as we do, imploringly: thy kingdom come.

"For our sakes a child is born, to our race a son is given, whose shoulder will bear the scepter of princely power."

By this, a figure of the cross is meant, on which he was firmly nailed on his back. For the cross was and is for him, and through him for us, a disgrace. And this is what he calls the scepter of princely power.

IRENÆUS OF LYONS

We long ardently to reign soon and not much longer to serve. Even if the Lord's Prayer contained no petition for the coming of the kingdom, we should have to express the desire on our own behalf and hasten lovingly to embrace the object of our hope. And the souls of the blood-witnesses under the altar cry out with indignation to the Lord: "How long now before thou wilt sit in judgment and exact vengeance for our blood from all those who dwell on earth?" And vengeance is dependent on the end of the world.

No one will reach the kingdom of heaven unsought.

TERTULLIAN

When the kingdom of God "comes unwatched by men's eyes" according to the words of our Lord and Savior, no one will be able to say: "See, it is here, or there," but when "the kingdom of God is here, within you," then he who is praying for the coming of the kingdom prays reasonably that God's kingdom which is in his heart may grow, bear fruit and become perfect. For every perfect man is ruled by God, each is attentive to the spiritual laws of God. The Father is with him and with the Father Christ reigns, according to the words of Scripture: "We will both come to him and make our continual abode with him."—But every sinner is dominated by the "prince of this world," he is ruled by sin itself. Therefore Paul said: "You must not, then, allow sin to tyrannize over your perishable bodies, to make you subject to appetites."—"What has innocence to do with lawlessness? What is there in common between Christ and Belial?" Where God's kingdom is there cannot at the same time be a devil's kingdom.

ORIGEN

Dearly beloved brothers, Christ himself may be the kingdom of God. Daily we ask for the kingdom to come, his early coming is what we long for.

Whoever is dedicated to God and Christ longs not for the earthly but for the heavenly kingdom. Unremittent prayer is needed not to lose the heavenly kingdom, like the Jews who were the first to lose it. Since the name "Father" was lost to them, the kingdom was lost for them too.

CYPRIAN OF CARTHAGE

The true Church here on earth is an image of the kingdom yonder. Just as in heaven harmony reigns, so in the holy Church there must be unity.

EPHRAIM THE SYRIAN

When we pray for the coming of the kingdom, what we are begging from God is approximately this:

"May I be saved from ruin, freed from death, released from the shackles of sin. No longer shall death rule over me, no longer shall the tyranny of evil have effect, nor shall the fiend have power over me nor sin imprison me. No, thy kingdom shall come to me, so that the passions which now govern me and would make of me their slave may loose their hold on me, or rather, disappear completely.—How good it is to say: "Thy kingdom come!" When we say this, we make approximately the following petition to God: May the battle-array of the foe be annihilated, may their massed armies be scattered, may the war of our nature against the spirit be ended. May our body not be a base for the enemies of our soul, may the King appear to me in his might, the hosts of angels the myriads of Powers, the ten thousands who stand at his right hand, so that a thousand warriors may fall in the ranks of the adversary. The enemy is numerous, but only for those whom thy help has abandoned; terrible and invincible only when the besieged stands alone. But when thy kingdom dawns, mourning and lamentation are over; in their place there come life, gladness, rejoicing.

GREGORY OF NYSSA

In the second petition of the "Our Father," we implore that the domination of the devil in the world may come to an end, so that God and not sin may rule in each one of us.

JEROME

No one who lives at the court of a king and is held worthy to come and go there, will depart and run among the shops and inns and the like, but will hold intercourse only with those who are also of the king's court.

THEODORE OF MOPSUESTIA

The kingdom of God is coming, whether we like it or not. That God reigns so powerfully needs no words to tell it—it is obvious!

Christ was king, no king made king by men, but one who would give men a kingdom.

He did indeed come, not then to reign as he will reign, in that we say: "Thy kingdom come." He does reign always with the Father in that he is the Son of God, the Word of God, the Word through Whom all things are. The prophets foretold his kingdom, in that Christ became Man and made Christians of his followers. So it is a kingdom of Christians that is now being assembled, now being won, now being bought, with the Blood of Christ. His kingdom will emerge openly one day when the brightness of his saints will appear, after the judgment which the Son of Man will hold as he declared. Of this judgment the apostle said it was to be "when he places his kingship in the hands of God, his Father." Moreover he says himself: "Come, you that have received a blessing from my Father, take possession of the kingdom which has been prepared for you since the foundation of the world." But his disciples and the crowds that believed in him thought he had come to reign immediately. That meant, taking him and making a king of him, wanting to forestall his time, which he kept secret in order to make it known at the right time and reveal it at the right moment at the end of the world.

In the second petition, the heart pure of sin desires that the kingdom of his Father may come now, the kingdom of which Christ is King, and where he always reigns in the saints, if ugly vices are eradicated, the devil's rule is set aside, and God's rule is revealed in the splendor of virtues, if chastity takes the place of fornication, peace the place of anger, humility the place of pride reigning in our heart. But we also pray for the coming of that kingdom promised at the time ordained for it to all who are perfect, all God's children. Then we shall hear Christ say: "Come, you that have received a blessing from my Father, take possession of the kingdom which has been prepared for you since the foundation of the world."

JOHN CASSIAN

We implore that he whose reign has always been, may reign in us too, that we may rule in him. Satan has ruled over us, sin, death have ruled over us; we implore that slavery be put into servitude and we be made free, to live and rule forever. In the kingdom you receive what the Lord promises you in his love, when he says: "Come, blessed of my Father, take possession of the kingdom which is prepared for you from the beginning of the world."

PETER CHRYSOLOGUS

All-saving Christ will come and will descend as Judge. No longer into our lowliness, however, but in divine glory, surrounded by angels, to judge the world.—Christ commanded that we should ask in prayer for the coming of that day, truly visible to all, so that men may recognize that they are not to live loosely and unchastely, but rather, in a way becoming to saints and well pleasing to God.—Thus the saints pray that the time may dawn when our Redeemer will begin his reign over the whole universe. They trust that they may appear radiant before their Judge.

CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA

Thy kingdom come soon, that kingdom
Free of death, knowing no end, which no more times shall follow
Into eternity; knowing naught of change,
Continuing day and night. Here Christ is exultant,
The Prince, bearing the eternal wreath upon his noble brow,
The Victor, distributing rich reward to the fighters!

CAELIUS SEDULIUS

Thy kingdom come, means: May Christ come, the Lord, whom the choir of the saints daily expects, filled with awe; depending on whose promises the just are confident they will rule; of whose advent the apostle says: "We shall be taken up into the clouds. . . . And so we shall be with the Lord forever."

VENANTIUS FORTUNATUS

The second petition means the reign of Christ, the victory over Satan through passion, death and resurrection. It will be final when Christ gives the kingdom over to the Father. Although the kingdom of God has already come, since Christ was crowned with glory and honor through his passion and death, we pray nonetheless: "Thy kingdom come." It means: May it be made perfect

through the destruction of death, and "may all things be subject to God."

RUPERT VON DEUTZ

May thy Church, O Lord, which is thy kingdom, when she hears thy summons, pass over from the afflictions of this world into the glory of her heavenly home.

HUGO OF ST. VICTOR

The kingdom of God is what John describes in the Apocalypse: "And I, John, saw in my vision that holy city which is the new Jerusalem, being sent down by God from heaven, all clothed in readiness, like a bride who has adorned herself to meet her husband." From this he concluded that the people were the entire people of the future saints, that is, God's people, and He their God. And he concluded further that God wipes away all tears from the eyes of his saints. Moreover, there will be no weeping or lamentation nor any pain whatsoever, for all will have disappeared with the old, natural man. And he will sit on the throne and will say: "See, I make all things new," as though he were actually saying: You who through grace move in the newness of life, shall be renewed still further through the glory to which Jesus Christ leads us, who is One God with the Father and the Holy Spirit, praise be to him forever and ever. Amen.

PHILIP OF RATHSAMHAUSEN

O Lord, here the kingdom of the world has possession of my soul, and distracts it, wounds it, utterly sullies it. My entire heart, my mind, my passions, chose vanity, or rather the filth of this world. Thus I know nothing but what is worldly, I desire only what is of the flesh, I think only of what is earthly and love that alone. I am become a citizen of this world and am busy fighting under the prince of the world. And yet, Lord, am I not thy creature? Then may thy kingdom come, that the prince of this world may be thrown out, so that thou alone may inhabit my spirit, thou alone rule in me. May thy kingdom govern me completely, may all my desires be subject to it, may it alone inspire love in me. What do I seek? What do I desire? Why do I prowl about? Where shall I flee? How distract myself? Thy kingdom, O lord, suffices me indeed. Thy kingdom come, then. There my refreshment is found, there my dwelling-place, there my *raison d'être*.

Thou alone art good, art lovely, art deserving of love and desire, thou lover of souls! Guide thou me, thou alone! Draw me to thee, possess my heart, thou who art zealous for souls! In thee alone shall I find flooding inward bliss, in thee alone may my heart rest. Fill my soul utterly! Quickly will I climb up to thee, my focus and my kingdom, thou Ransomer of souls! May thy kingdom come!

BONAVENTURA

God's kingdom must display three characteristics: adornment, strength and effective justice.

The adornment of the kingdom consists in crown, purple, buckle, scepter and throne.—The crown as adornment for the head signifies that the mind is adorned with wisdom, understanding, learning, intelligence, skill.—The purple indicates the adornment of outward behavior.—The red royal robe signifies the Lord Jesus, who has passed through the sea of great bitterness and colored with his blood the royal robe of his life and his activity.—The scepter is the sign of dominion, ever flowering in virtue and justice, ever sprouting just and right utterances, ever upright as a sign of just works.—The throne, finally, signifies steadiness of spirit in all the accidents of fortune, in the turmoil of the world and amid all the vicissitudes of life. "Thy throne, O God, endures forever and ever."

The strength of the kingdom is shown in that the kingdom cannot be humbled and always and everywhere preserves its loftiness and sublimity. As no assaults can diminish its strength, it is to be feared by all who rise up against it. It proves its strength in preserving order in the punishment of wickedness. This order is a part of its strength.

The function of the kingdom is to see to the administration of justice, to allot officers appropriate to their holders.—What applies on a smaller scale to a householder applies on a larger scale to the king.

ALBERT THE GREAT

In the second petition of the Lord's Prayer we pray, first of all, that the just be converted, sinners punished and death abolished.

Secondly, we pray that we may be partakers of the heavenly kingdom.

Thirdly, we implore that not sin, but God himself, may hold sway over us.

But as the kingdom of God has always existed, why do we pray that it come?—The kingdom of God's reign will first be revealed when men are subject to the kingdom. God is of himself and of his nature the Lord of all, and Christ as God and Man has received from God lordship over all. Thus all that belongs to him must be subject to him too. But this state has not yet been reached, it will only be fully realized at the end of time.

For sinners, "thy kingdom come" signifies something awe-inspiring, for it is written that according to God's will they will be delivered over to punishment.

The Kingdom of heaven is called—and no wonder—the glory of paradise. Kingdom, however, is none other than the exercise of sovereignty. And sovereignty is best realized where nothing is found to oppose the will of the sovereign. But the will of God is the salvation of men, for he wishes all men to be saved. Now this state will only be made completely perfect in paradise, where nothing more will oppose man's salvation.—So when we pray: Thy kingdom come, we beg that we may be participators in the kingdom of heaven and the glory of paradise.

THOMAS AQUINAS

Thy kingdom come! Eternal God himself is the kingdom, and in the same kingdom he rules in all creatures endowed with reason. Thus, what we pray for is really God himself, with all his kingdom. In the same kingdom God is our *Father*, and here fatherly faithfulness and fatherly strength are shown, in that he finds in us real room for the accomplishment of his noble, pure work. There indeed the *name* of God will be hallowed, magnified and known. Thus, he is hallowed in us, in that he would really rule in us and accomplish his noble, pure work, without any hindrance; then his *will* shall truly be done on earth as it is in heaven, that is, in us as in himself. Children, how often a man gives up this work done in God's will, and then quickly takes up God's will again, and this ought not to be. Dear child, whenever this departure of yours occurs, begin again manfully and give yourself freely and cheerfully to the will of God, firmly established in right and true patience, and truly trust to the fatherly strength of God, which can do all things and has so often preserved you and still preserves

you at every hour, day and night, in body and mind; in him put your whole trust and seek his justice.

Now, one would like to ask how it is when, as it is said, God abandons no man who truly puts his trust in him and places his hope in him; and yet it comes about that God often lets his chosen friends suffer want, poverty and infirmity here in this world. Children, he does that (so says St. Albert) for three reasons. The first reason is, that God would *test* man, to see if he will trust him, and believe in him. Therefore he often lets a man come to live in poverty, misery, adversity and affliction, to teach him patience. And on this account, too, that when God comes to his assistance in his need and misery, he shall *acknowledge* God's help and his fatherly kindness, in order that divine love and gratitude increase in man, and grow, and that he thus be driven nearer and closer to God.

Therefore, seek first the kingdom of heaven; it is simply God alone and nothing else. And when man has grown pure and all attachments are thrown off, then the will of God will truly be done on earth as it is in heaven and will be perfected in his elect; that is, when man is in a position to intend nothing and desire nothing but truly the eternal will of God, then he himself becomes God's kingdom and God rules truly in him. There sits the eternal, royal Lord on his royal throne and commands and rules man utterly according to all his will.

This noble kingdom is actually in the inmost depth of man, that is, when with all industry man draws the outward man into the inward, reason-governed man, and these two men, that is, the powers of sense and of reason, in mutual accord enter into the most inmost man of all, that is, into the seclusion of the spirit where the true divine image lies, and all at once attains to the divine abyss of God in which he has dwelt forever, uncreated. When merciful God finds man attentive to him in all his candidness and simplicity, the divine, fatherly abyss of God bows down and sinks into the candid, attentive depth of man and there reforms his created depth and draws it into his non-created Being, so that the candid spirit of man be one with him. Were man able to see himself, he would see himself in God. He would also see all thoughts, words, works, intentions and ways of all men and moreover, all that ever happened; all this you ought to accept as true, and see whether you had not better enter into this kingdom, for in this high state all cares would fall away. Children, I tell you truly, that

is the kingdom of God which should be sought first, and his justice, that is, in all that occurs to let God be truly the right end of all our intentions, outwardly and inwardly.

JOHN TAULER

"Thy kingdom come," that is, Last Judgment is indeed necessary for us, to make us live virtuously and have a good conscience all the time, for we do not know how we shall be judged and do not know the future of this world either.—To pious and God-fearing men, the prayer, "Thy kingdom come" is lovely and pleasing.

NICHOLAS OF DINKELSBÜHL

The eternal kingdom of God and the kingdom of this world are indeed far apart. Do we want to pass from the transient kingdom to the eternal, it must come about through our Lord Jesus Christ by reason of his holy merit, and we must finally despise all this, and, though it hurt, willingly give up, for God's sake, all that we here possess: skin and hair and life into the bargain! The king and all princes must leave it behind, whether they like it or not.

NICHOLAS OF CUES

God's kingdom is holy Christendom.—"May it come" means, may it be fully perfect, may God enlighten the hearts of believers and heathen, and may all reach the heavenly kingdom and accept our holy faith.

The kingdom of God is one's own soul. We should pray the kingdom of God may come, that is, be sent into us and ordered in us, and that the wicked foe may no longer rule there and participate in it, but God, who created it and to whom it belongs.

In the kingdom of the world there is more lamentation and affliction than joy and pleasure. This kingdom has only a short duration or none at all, for the world with its joys and pleasures perishes. And then, when man would most like to be in this kingdom he must be off.—

The other kingdom is the kingdom of the evil spirit, who is prince over all the children of pride. This kingdom is divided and torn asunder. Here there is nothing but wailing and gnashing of teeth.

The kingdom of God is the joy of everlasting blessedness. It comes to us from pure grace and from the power of the bitter passion of Christ.

MARK OF WEIDA

His kingdom is partly on earth still, partly yonder in heaven. His kingdom on earth is a Christendom common to all. His kingdom in heaven is the kingdom of eternal blessedness. He who is not in his kingdom here will not enter it there. The first kingdom is still among wrongful desires, melancholy, poverty, discontent, and manifold afflictions and distresses, anguishes and death.

JOHN DIETENBERGER

God's kingdom and Christ's kingdom and the kingdom of heaven are the same; it is called God's kingdom because God rules there in justice, power, mercy and wisdom, further, because the good things and treasures of God are hidden there. It is called Christ's kingdom because Christ is placed over this kingdom as king and leader, and because all power is given him in heaven and on earth. It is called kingdom of heaven so that it may be clear it is no earthly, outward kingdom, but a spiritual and heavenly one. "My kingdom is not of this world." Just as an earthly kingdom has to have a king or prince, and people or citizens, and outward power and possessions, so does God's kingdom, whose king is Christ and whose citizens are all Christians. The possessions of this kingdom consist in justice, peace, faithfulness, etc. That is why God's kingdom is often called Christ, in Holy Scripture, after the King in this kingdom. In another place, the Church of the faithful is called kingdom; then, too, it may consist in the good things of God, chiefly eternal blessedness; or else, the word of God, which is the scepter of this kingdom. If you take all this for the kingdom of heaven, then the parable is true, that it is like a grain of mustard seed. And in order to make it still more evident, we will explain it in detail. When you take the King for the kingdom, the parable is true, for Christ was despised like the grain of mustard seed. What was more humbly esteemed than he was, before he was sown in the earth in death? "He dispossessed himself and took the nature of a slave. . ." (Phil. 2:7.) And Isaiah says: "No stateliness here, no majesty, no beauty, as we gaze upon him, to win our hearts" (Isa. 53:3); thus, the pharisees called the Son of God a sinner and a man possessed. Though he was king, he wore no golden crown. The grain of mustard seed is small, but has much power in it. Laid in the earth, it grows up high, so that St. Paul could say: "God has given him that name that is greater than any other man" (Phil. 2:9). He grew up to God's throne, and God himself made him sit at his right hand. He spread out his branches to the boundaries of the earth and the birds of the

sky dwelt in his shadow. Christ is become our justice and our sanctification.

JOHN WILD

The kingdom of God can be understood in three ways, for we find a realm of nature, a realm of grace and realm of glory. The realm of nature is the one through which God governs and guides all creatures, as the true Lord of all things. . . . The realm of grace is the one through which God governs and guides souls and the hearts of good Christians, in that he gives them the Spirit and grace to serve him readily. The realm of glory will come about in the next life, after the day of the Last Judgment; for then God with all the saints will rule over all creatures without any opposition. Then all power will be taken from the godless and the devils, who will remain locked up in the eternal prison of hell. Then death and corruption shall be blotted out, with all the temptations of the world and the flesh which at present affront God's servants, for this will be a quiet and peaceful realm with the pure possession of perfect and eternal blessedness. . . .

This third realm to come (as the petition says) is awaited with great longing by all who know this miserable life. Thus, in this petition we desire our highest good and the perfect glory of soul and body.

ROBERT BELLARMIN

We pray that God alone may dwell in us, he alone rule in us, so that there may be no place left for death, and death be swallowed up in the victory of Christ, our Lord; may he subdue all things to his rule.

We should earnestly pray God's Spirit to command us to do everything according to his will; to abolish Satan's realm, so that on the Last Day he may have no power over us; that Christ gain the victory and triumph; that his law obtain throughout the earth; that his commands be observed; that no one betray him or abandon him, but that all so live that they come without dread before the face of God the King and attain to the possession of the kingdom of heaven that was prepared for them forever, where they will enjoy eternal life, blessed with Christ.

The immensity of heaven's glory is beyond our mind to conceive, there is no possibility that it could wholly enter our heart; therefore we must ourselves enter into it, that is, into the "joy of

our Lord"; then, in the splendor of blessedness, we can wholly and fully satisfy the longing of our heart.

The kingdom of heaven for which we beg in the second petition is the pivot and ultimate goal of the gospel.

ROMAN CATECHISM

Jesus was born on earth and this alone constitutes the greatness and happiness of the earth; but he comes from heaven and not from the earth and his kingdom is a heavenly one. . . . He was born in a stable, he lay in a manger, but his power reaches into the heights of heaven. . . . This mystery of the Child Jesus, the King of kings, whom kings adore, is a very lofty and royal mystery.

PIERRE DE BÉRULLE

May we commend to thee our universal misery and corruption. Destroy the kingdom of Satan within us and throughout us more and more utterly, and let thy kingdom and the kingdom of thy dear Son grow and increase in our hearts. Grant assistance to the social distress that afflicts so many lands, preserve our fields to us. Bless and protect our land, our city, our house.

JOHANN GEORG HAMANN

Father, may thy kingdom come to us, may thy kingdom extend further and further among men. Jesus Christ came down to us on earth, to found this kingdom of his afresh and spread it abroad, and he told us to pray to thee: Thy kingdom come! Thus, Father, in the name of thy Son, that is, in his mind and in his Spirit we call to thee; Father! May thy kingdom be victorious over all the realms of darkness and sin, death and hell. Thy kingdom is a realm of *light*. Therefore may the darkness of ignorance be scattered, and all the deceptions of error, so that all men may know thee and him whom thou didst send to us, thy Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Thy kingdom is a realm of *power*. Give men strength for holy determination to break the shackles of sin, to gain the freedom that belongs to thy children, and not to relinquish this freedom for any earthly pleasure more.

Thy kingdom is a realm of *love*. Therefore let the example of thy love, who gave up thy Son for us, the example of Jesus Christ, who loved us unto death, be the *one* model for our love, that we may love thee and our brothers as thou hast first loved us.

Thy kingdom is still a realm of *warfare* against flesh and blood,

world and hell. Arm us therefore with the sword of faith, that we may not tremble before our enemies but stand like men over against them, and bring our battle to a happy end and gain the imperishable wreath of victory.

Thy kingdom is a realm of *grace*, or unmerited and not-to-be-merited favor. O, indeed, may the grace of Jesus Christ, which showed itself so mighty in the first disciples, and fought so victoriously in the first battles for his kingdom, may this rich power come into our heart! For without this grace we are like dry branches cut from the vine, sapless and weak, with neither fruit nor life, of no use but to be thrown into the fire. But where thy grace reigns, there dost thou reign, and where thou reignest, all warfare between flesh and spirit is ended, or at least the victory of spirit over flesh is assured.

Thy kingdom, Father, is also a realm of *glory*. Through his Blood Jesus Christ has gained this kingdom for himself and us. He is Lord and King in this kingdom; he rules in thy name. We are now his subjects, but are to be his fellow-rulers one day. Father, may this kingdom come to us; for this kingdom our whole being longs, for it is the kingdom of peace and blessedness, the kingdom of perfection, the kingdom of the eternal Sabbath. Keep our courage from dying down in the manifold sufferings and temptations of this life, so that we may be worthy one day to rejoice in thee in this thy kingdom. Father, thy kingdom come. Then every tear will be wiped away, all suffering be rewarded, all darkness will be light, all fear be turned into joy, all labor to exultation, all fighting to victory, all patience to blessedness, all humility to glory, all faith to vision, all hope to possession, all love to enjoyment, all beginning to fulfillment. Father, this kingdom of thine be all, all! Amen.

JOHANN MICHAEL SAILER

Both the inner development and the outward spread of Christ's kingdom depend, first, on the grace and help of God, but then, also, on the free cooperation of men. The supernatural sources of light and life, the treasures of truth and grace which the Church possesses, could and should hallow all minds and hearts, enrich all ways of thinking and renew the face of the earth. The kingdom of God grows and supplies strength inwardly if among its members the Christian life of faith and virtue acquire an increasing hold over them.

The Redeemer's realm of peace and blessing shall encompass all

lands, embrace all peoples, spread to the limits of the earth's globe. But many, many millions are still outside the visible kingdom of God. The "harvest" is therefore very great and "the workers are few." Our petition is, then, properly a mission petition: it should awaken and foster among the faithful a sense of mission and a zeal for missions, and rouse an interest for the missions inspired by a spirit of self-sacrifice. May all contribute through prayer and gifts, to the best of their capacity, that such innumerably many erring, unshepherded souls may be led to the Church, and in the Church find salvation.

We pray therefore that the Church may expand *outwards*, but inwards too in spiritual growth may it develop and progress, so that the people who belong to the Lord and are devoted to him may increase, both numerically and in merit. The kingdom of our divine Prince of Peace will remain on earth as long as this age lasts, to pass on at the end of it into the Church Triumphant, in that eternally perfected ultimate kingdom in heaven, whose coming the Lord and his apostles so often and so urgently called to mind, so that the faithful might never lose sight of the day of the splendid return of our great God and Savior, and never forget it. The whole of creation longs ardently for the full freedom of the children of God in the kingdom of eternal glory.

NICHOLAS GIHR

The idea of God's rule was already present in the Old-Testament conception of God. As Creator of the world and its only true God, Jahve is also its Lord and King. Moreover he is specially the King of Israel, the chosen people, for the heathen nations did not acknowledge him as king. The kingdom set up in Sion is but the visible form of this rule of God's. The conception of God's kingdom already included the idea that it would one day (in reality, not merely in principle) spread to the whole world. This rule of God's, encompassing the earth and enduring forever, to include within itself all religious and earthly goods, is an eschatological dimension, that is, one belonging to the end of time, which God will bring into existence without any human help.

JOSEPH SCHMID

So the sovereignty of our Redeemer embraces the whole of mankind. In this connection we gladly make our own the words of our predecessor, Leo XIII, of immortal memory, who once wrote: "In-

deed his sovereignty extends not only to cover the nations of the Catholic faith, nor only those people who are validly baptized and thus certainly belong to the Church by right, however much they may go other ways as a result of erroneous opinions, or through misunderstandings remain apart from our communion in love. But it embraces far more, all the many who are outside the Christian faith. It is the fullest truth: the whole of the human race is subject to the power of Jesus Christ." (Encyclical *Annum Sacrum*, May 25, 1899.) In this connection there is no difference at all between individual, home society and civic group. For people joined together in groups are just as much subject to Christ's power as individuals. There is in fact only one and the same source for the salvation of individuals and the salvation of all: in him alone is salvation. "Salvation is not to be found elsewhere; this alone of all the names under heaven has been appointed to men as the one by which we must needs be saved" (Act 4:12). For individual citizens, and for all and sundry there is only one author of well-being and genuine true happiness: "Nothing else makes the state happy but what makes the individual happy; the state is indeed nothing but a number of individual men living together in concord." (St. Augustine, 2nd Letter to Macedonius, III, 9.) The governors and leaders of nations should therefore not object to acknowledging Christ's supreme sovereignty publicly and paying him due reverence and obedience in personal life, letting their peoples do the same, though in other matters they safeguard their own authority and at the same time endeavor to promote and increase the welfare of their country. For what we wrote at the beginning of our Pontificate on the considerable weakening of the authority of the law as well as of respect for public power, would be just as appropriate and suitable for the present day: "God and Jesus Christ—as we had then to complain—God and Jesus Christ have been turned out of the laws and out of public life, and authority is supposed to be derived no longer from God but from men. So it came about that all authority was fundamentally undermined, for indeed the main fundament of it had been removed, according to which some had the right to command, the others the duty to obey. The whole of human society must unavoidably be shaken by this, for it now lacks that firm foundation pillar which was able to bear it and support it." (Encyclical *Ubi arcano*.)

Were mankind once to decide to acknowledge Christ's royal power in private and in public life, an immeasurable flood of bless-

ing would inevitably pour through the whole of mankind: just freedom, quiet and order, concord and peace. As the royal dignity of our Lord Jesus Christ gives the human authority of the princes and leaders of the nations a wholly religious consecration, so does the dutiful obedience of the citizens have nobility. It is true that the Apostle Paul gives married women and slaves the order to reverence Jesus Christ in their husbands, in their masters. But he warns against offering them, as men, an obedience due to them solely for the reason that they represent Christ. For those who are ransomed in Christ, it is a shame to be a man's slave: "A price was paid to redeem you; do not enslave yourselves to human masters" (I Cor. 7:23). When lawful princes and rulers are penetrated with the conviction that they administer their office not so much by any right of their own as rather commissioned to do so by the divine King whom they represent, then they will make a holy, wise use of their authority,—as everyone will agree—and when they have laws to promulgate or execute, will take special account of the general welfare and the human dignity of their subjects. Then quiet and order will indeed flourish enduringly, for every cause of revolt is laid aside. For did the citizen see in the princes and other rulers of the state-apparatus men who are merely his equals by nature, or who appear to him to be for some reason unworthy or reprehensible, nonetheless he would not refuse their governance on that account, perceiving in them the image and authority of the God-Man Christ. Finally, as regards the gifts of concord and peace; the more one kingdom spreads and extends to the whole of the human race, the more will men be aware of the fellowship that binds them together. And this sense of fellowship forestalls and prevents a number of conflicts, or in any case it can reduce and diminish the severity of such conflicts. Indeed, if the realm of Christ embraced in fact the whole of mankind, as it does by right, we should have no need to despair of a peace which the world's King of Peace brought about; the King who came to reconcile all, who did not come to be served, but to serve others, who although Lord of the world, nonetheless chose to be himself a model in humility, and made love and humility together his main commandment; he who could moreover say: My yoke is pleasant and my burden is light. What a delight and a blessedness that would be, if individuals, families and states let themselves be wholly governed and guided by Christ! "Then at last"—we use the words our predecessor Leo XIII addressed to the whole body of the Bishops twenty-five

years ago—"then at last will it be possible to heal the many wounds, then law will blossom again as in the springtime, at the happy prospect for its old, venerable authority; then all the ornaments that adorn peace shall be restored, and even swords shall sink to the ground at last and weapons drop from men's hands, for all will accept the sovereignty of Christ with extreme delight, and submit to it, and then all tongues will glorify God the Father, confessing: Jesus Christ is the Lord." (Encyclical *Annum Sacrum* of May 25, 1899.)

POPE PIUS XI

We bring thee back great Christendom, churches and towns and towers,

And if our hands are glad, O God, to cast them down like flowers,
'Tis not that they enrich thy hands, but they are saved from ours.

G. K. CHESTERTON

In St. Luke, the departing Lord was a pretendent to a throne; he went away to a distant country "to have the royal title bestowed on him" (Luke 19:12). Thus the princes of Herod's household went to Rome to be named king or tetrarch by the emperor. . . . In St. Luke Jesus compares the Messiah to an unwelcome candidate for the throne. For the spokesmen of Jewish orthodoxy did not want to have him as king. However, by this means he stressed the fact that he was not a private person but a political personality. He is to be compared to a statesman, but one whose leadership is unwelcome to the people. Therefore he must go abroad to have his crown bestowed on him by a superior authority. For the followers of Herod, that authority was the Roman emperor, for Jesus it is the Father in heaven. The parable in St. Luke's version is thus intended to curb the too hopeful enthusiasm of Jesus' followers. The imminent entry into Jerusalem is not yet to prepare the stage for the erection of the Messianic throne. For the opposition of the priests of the Temple and the Pharisees will not be overcome. Thus the Messiah will go abroad, that is, he will leave earthly life to be crowned by God in heaven. But in the future, when the time has come, he will come back and take over his royal rule in spite of all opposition. Now, during his absence he confides his property in the land to his servants. When he goes to heaven, Jesus will leave a property on earth, which his followers are to administer for him. Thus, in all explicitness, the situation of the Church is described as

it was to arise when, in Jesus' absence, his twelve disciples took over its direction.

KARL BUCHHEIM

In the kingdom-petition, however much the rabbinical turn of phrase may cover it over, Jesus expresses not merely an eschatological situation, but also a present one, now in process of being carried out in human history. . . .

In the kingdom-petition he expresses that great situation in which those who belong to him learn to know God as their heavenly Father, that is, will be children of his kingdom and will prove themselves to be so, to be his family, with God ruling as Father and they adhering to the Father as brothers in Christ—now already, during the time of our earthly pilgrimage, but properly so at the end, in the glory of heaven. The kingdom of the Father—the kingdom of his love, in which men will be the children of his love and reveal themselves as children of his love,—and this kingdom of the Father in time and in eternity, that is the content of the second petition of the "Our Father": "Thy kingdom come."

THADDÄUS SOIRON

Through Christ, the kingdom of God came into the world as such. Whether it come also to individual men depends on each single one alone; no one is exempt from this personal decision!

There are several kingdoms in the world, the vegetable kingdom, the animal kingdom, the mineral kingdom, the kingdom of the mind, the kingdoms of nations and states. The kingdom of God will and can come to all of them, transforming and renewing—through man, who becomes an organ of this kingdom.

BERNARD MARTIN

The kingdom of God is within us. What an amazing statement. So many explorers have set out bravely and faced countless hardships to scan in the midst of the jungle the ruins of some ancient kingdom, and the fruit of their labors is as dead as the ruins themselves. To think that all the time we have within us this inexhaustible source of strength and knowledge, this resource of immortality, and make no effort to discover it!

PAUL CLAUDEL

My kingship, our Lord said, is not of this world. The true crowning of his humanity by man is to be done inwardly in the hearts of

men. And when he is thus enthroned in a human heart, which has known the darkness and faced it creatively, and now knows and lives in the light, it is impossible for that heart to grow old and dry and cynical and self-absorbed: it must become a place full of springs: it must have in it the ardor and high purpose, the freshness and energy, of unspoilt youth, because it is living in love, and love is always pouring into it, and so it becomes in truth an *organum pulsatum a Spiritu sancto*, an instrument played on by the Holy Spirit . . . and so able, at all times, whatever the moment may bring, to cooperate with the work of the Spirit in renewing, rejuvenating, the face of the earth.

GERALD VANN, O.P.

It was Jesus' mission to proclaim the kingdom of God, and that meant more than the mere awakening of a hope. God's kingdom exists because it was proclaimed; for his word has creative power. It is a summons which brings us into his kingdom by showing us Christ. We are already bound to the power of God by the fact that nature forms us; but nature cannot bring it about that every knee will bow before God; rather we suffer our dependence without our will and against our will. The attempt to come into some sort of relationship with God is what constitutes history; but it cannot bring it about that every tongue will acknowledge God. On the contrary, when he exploits the gifts nature proffers him, man speaks of *his* achievement and *his* renown. But God intends something better for us men, not merely blind subjection, not merely yearning for the unknown God, not merely accepting our allotted burden till our appointed death, but the disclosure of the glory of God in almighty grace and almighty judgment, his royal act bestowing knowledge of him on all, and turning all into his adoring worshippers.

ADOLF SCHLATTER

In the course of a wildly tumultuous history, we meet the traces of this kingdom. We are drawn in under the spell of this kingdom because Christ has spoken to us, because we cannot detach from his message either our history or the history of our people.

But where this kingdom with its claims to dominion meets us, it demands the whole of a man, completely transforms him and gives him a new eye and heart for all situations here on earth. As the faithful, we are fighting in this kingdom. God's kingdom in

our earthly realms, God's kingdom in our life—it is always the vertical which drops from above upon all that is horizontal. Here discussions are of no avail, here decisions are made.

UDO SMIDT

When it does come, O my Master, it may seem that all else in my soul is uprooted.

Thy kingdom may seem to come as a thief in the night. It really comes as a Bridegroom.

And if only my lamp of hope is alight, the Bridegroom will find me ready and will enter in, and my soul will be unto me a Kingdom of Hope.

VINCENT MCNABB

Thy kingdom come.—With this petition our heart should anticipate the state of affairs when all will radiate God, all be subject to God, and what we now believe in faith be revealed: heaven and earth are full of thy glory! When death and mourning and pain and lamentation will be no more! And there will be no injustice or lying or violence or wickedness or malice—nor that puzzling combination of events out of which evil comes, and yet no one can say exactly where injustice lay—when people are friendly to one another in unassumed love, in the love of Christ!

The kingdom of God means Judgment, too. If one of the parables of the kingdom of God tells of its hidden coming and growth, another shows it as decision and judgment. The hour of its coming is the hour of judgment; and judgment is already in preparation, and is pre-formed in people's attitude to what is offered them, disguised and in weakness, the Word especially—whether they are believing or indifferent. To believe means, precisely, already to have taken on judgment upon oneself, as a continuous process. We pray for judgment, for without its demarcation, shutting out evil, the purity and glory of the kingdom cannot shine forth. We pray for judgment, because we love truth, if we do love it, more than ourself; because we want the true and the false to be separated in us, want good apart from evil, light apart from darkness, and what is genuine apart from what is spurious.

EUGEN WALTER

Thy kingdom come means: May thy kingdom, which is fulfilled in the Son, be fulfilled in each of us. For the Son praying to the Father for the coming of his kingdom has this kingdom in him.

But he does not carry it locked up but expends it lavishly. It is in him like the first sign of his coming Eucharist, just as he has his Body in him, the body he took on, in order to go on giving it away without limit. He has the kingdom in him as the valid sign of redemption: so when he prays for the kingdom to come, we perceive that it is on the way, and thus that redemption is near at hand. With our redemption in process of accomplishment, we should pray with him that the kingdom of the Father may come. Come as the Father wills, without conditions made by us, just as the Son became man unconditionally, so as to be able to pray to the Father from the earth, as from a distance: *Thy kingdom come!* He calls from a distance, and yet he has the kingdom in him. And when the Father hearkens to him and looks at him, he sees his kingdom in the Son. But although the Son is already busy bringing the kingdom in, he still prays to the Father that it may come, not in any impatience wanting to make it come more quickly, but because he is so wholly concerned with fulfilling the Father's will that—in the distance imposed by performance of it—he prays anew for grace that the will of the Father may be accomplished through him. As though he were so busy with the performance of it that he scarcely noticed he himself was the performer, but only looked to the Father and his will: that his will be fulfilled. The Son, in process of coming, prays that the Father's kingdom may come. He is so much engaged in coming that he forgets, as it were, that he is coming, and prays for the grace of coming, prays for the grace of the kingdom.

ADRIENNE VON SPEYER

Indeed, Lord, thou wilt come. As the lightning flickers to the east and lights up the whole sky to the west, so wilt thou come. Thou wilt come as destiny comes, inescapably, for thou art the destiny of the world.

Thou comest upon all who saw thee and yet did not see thee, who heard thee and yet did not understand. Upon mockers and haters, the drunken and the dreamers, doubters and those in despair. Thou who wast cast out, sold, beaten, crucified, silenced in death. Thou wilt shine out in the night of their souls like lightning. Like lightning wilt thou shatter them together with their idols. Like burning embers thou wilt consume their rotten lives. Like rolling thunder the voice of thy judgment shall come over them.

. . . And when all this begins to happen, then look up, lift up your heads: for your redemption is at hand! Yea, Lord, we shall know that it is thou. Thou warmly beloved, thou ardently expected One. Thou only God—over all men's idols. Thou, our Life and our Love. Thou Known though never Seen. Thou infinitely distant and yet most near. Thou eternal God and yet our Savior, our Brother and our Friend. We knew that thou art coming. Our inward eyes scanned the grey horizon for the first glimmer of thy Light. We set out to meet thee, hoping in thy Word, we left the satiated world behind us and built thy city in the wilderness and gave its gateways soaring arches, wide as our desire.

Hidden King, when thy banner flutters over the earth, we outcasts will turn home again. For thy sake we did not worship beasts and did not sell ourselves for venal rewards. We come back home and bring thee praises for thy greatness. . . . Thou too wert dead, despised, tortured, and thou livest! Thou dost come to take away from us death and mourning, lamentation and pain. . . . Thou dost come to lead us to the eternal marriage feast, where we shall drink from the springs of living water . . . , where our faith will turn into sight. And we shall see thy face and may carry thy name on our foreheads . . . And thou, Lord, wilt be our Light and our God!

Lord, thou art already here among us. Hidden indeed. But already we see the seam of light on the robe of thy glory. . . . Maran atha! Lord Jesus!

OTTO PIES

THY WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN

We have already considered the *form* of the "Our Father," and how its three first petitions, concerning God, his nature, his kingdom and his will, and the three last petitions, with man and his concerns for their theme, are like a movement from above downwards. However, in genuine prayer this movement does not remain unilateral, but streams back again on the current of divine power imparted, and finds, in the fulfillment of the seventh petition, eternal rest in our Lord God. Similarly, Jacob the Patriarch saw in his dream angels moving up and down a heavenly ladder. This flowing movement, prayer-symbol, of a wonderful intercourse between God and man, is most patent in the third petition of the prayer, where heaven and earth are joined together in a single phrase, in the unity of God's will.

What is God's will, as Christian revelation understands it? It is first of all that power which carries the eternal schemes of God over into the fullness of being. That is how St. John's Apocalypse describes it: "By thee all things were created; nothing ever was, nothing was ever created, but in obedience to thy will" (Apoc. 4: 11). The will of God is never just a plan, it is always at the same time effective power. In God, being and willing come together as one; as the "Cherubic Traveller" put it:

God is a Wonder-Thing: He is what He wills,
And wills what He is, without measure or end.

Seen with the eyes of faith, Willing and Doing in the Deity are none other than the Person of the Holy Spirit, bond of love between God *WHO IS* and God who creates. Thus the most

holy Trinity shines out in this part of the prayer as well, and the "will of God" has an intimate connection with the Holy Spirit in the third petition of the "Our Father."—God imprinted his three-fold image on the whole of creation and made his will known in all that is and everyone that lives. His will towards creatures is, in scriptural terms, his "pleasure," his "delight" in them. These expressions signify, openly or covertly, a relationship of love, just as the Person of the Holy Spirit is called Love. Certain commentators interpret this petition as a prayer to the Holy Spirit (Paschasius Radbertus). And the reflection of the Trinity in the first part of the "Our Father" harmonizes with that other three-fold picture of the three divine virtues: faith, hope and love (Ehrhard). Man's way of life immediately after his creation was entirely in accord with the will of God. Indeed, the paradisaical happiness of the first couple consisted in the continuous, effortless performance of what God's will inspired them to do. Likewise, the blessedness of the angels, who as God's messengers carry out his counsels, is identical with effecting the will of God.

Man's delight in God's will broke down with the misuse of his own will in disobedience towards God, and the Fall also destroyed his immediate knowledge of the divine will, and he ceased to be Son of God. Since the Fall a deep rift exists between the divine and the human will. Man wants of himself something different from what God wants, again and again he follows the call of his fallen nature, he utters his "I will not serve" to God's commands and thus rejects the divine will. Although through the Fall man tore all creation down with him into the abyss, the divine will went on working through it and still sustains the created world. This is evident in natural law: the paths of the stars, the changing seasons, the tides, the growth and maturing of plants, animals and men, are born and guided by his will expressed through the natural law. Man in particular, indirectly and directly, remains perpetually under the influence and protection of the divine will. Holy Scripture expresses this sym-

bolically by saying that all the hairs of our head are numbered, and no one by taking thought can add to his stature or diminish it. Within this field, we may say, God's will is done whether we like it or not. Where man is faced with a decision to make, it is not at all that he is placed in night and darkness, with the possibility of a good decision a mere matter of chance. Rather God gave him the possibility of recognizing good and evil and deciding freely, even after the Fall. The natural moral law, the divine revealed law of the Old Covenant, and above all "Christ's law" (Gal. 6:2), which is love, are given us as signposts on the way to God. Our will, moved, guided and strengthened by grace, can decide for God's way and—even as a way of the cross—follow it to the end. The Lord's example, placing himself in total subjection to the holy will of God, is for the Christian not merely a moral criterion by which he can test his own attitude. Christ's open assent to the Father's will, "not without a piercing cry, not without tears" (Heb. 5:7) opened up the possibility for us, too, to "die with Christ and to rise with him." Here we touch on one of the deepest mysteries of the Christian life. That "with Christ" draws us into the Son's surrender in love to the Father even before the foundation of the world. And we are properly empowered to realize the Lord's spirit of sacrifice in every moral decision, and thus turn it into a truly Christian decision. The petition that God's will be done was hallowed on the night of Gethsemane and it is perhaps the petition that binds us most personally to Christ, who began his holy passion and dying with those very words. It is the hardest of all, but also the most liberating.

As the realization of God's kingdom in conflict with Satan's realm is reflected in the history of nations, so the fulfillment of the petition that God's will be done is traced in the inner history of each man and thus determines his belonging to God's kingdom or to Satan's realm. Here, too, there are two powers at work, opposing one another, fighting one another; and only the ultimate victory of the divine will over human wilfulness,

which the liturgy calls "rebellious" (4th Sunday after Pentecost), leads on out of time into eternity, out of earth into heaven. And the answer to the first question of the catechism, on the meaning of life, concurs: "We are on earth to do God's holy will and thus to come to heaven."

But if we are to do God's will, we must first recognize it. Again and again we find in books, those of poets and those of spiritual writers, references to the two ways, the broad and easy highway of good living, spent under the sign of indulging personal wishes and inclinations, leading downwards, and the narrow, steep, stony way leading to our eternal home. Even pagan literature knew these two ways. If it is silent as to guidance by the will of God, at least it knows the ways of renunciation. The way of virtue is in general evident, and it is not difficult to see which is the path of life and which the path into the abyss. But as we go along we cannot always make out clearly and distinctly what God requires of us in such and such a situation. We have his commands and the directives of the Church, as well as the voice of our conscience. Nonetheless, conscience does not always speak out perceptibly and loud, but often sounds in a very low voice which is drowned in the noises of the day and the world and in gushes of self-will, so that a keeping quiet is most necessary, with a recollection of oneself before God, if it is to be heard. So understood, the third petition of the "Our Father" is a prayer for a sensitive ear, for the gift of self-knowledge and the power to make distinctions in the light of eternity. "Direct my way, Lord, as thou wilt, teach me thy own paths" as the Psalmist prays, and in another place he says, full of joyful hope, God will show him the way of life (Ps. 15:11).

The way of life. The phrase concerns doing, and conduct pleasing to God is not confined to knowing. On this point the Christian attitude is superior to platonic philosophy, where knowledge was in itself a virtue.—The resistance of self-will has constantly to be overcome, and it is a process that does not de-

pend on one single decision for or against God, but has to be continually reinforced.

Who has not experienced how tenaciously self-will bores and burrows away in us? How even when a decision for God is made once for all, we can never dare on our own account to take it as absolutely final. A constantly renewed "Yes, Father" is necessary, and that intimate closeness of God's presence, as the mystics knew it, is only born of the progressive crucifixion of self-will. It is hard to keep in step with God's will, particularly in times in which everything goes against our own wishes and decisions and plans and inclinations, when we are overcome with worries about our livelihood, health, advancement, and cannot see our way through. But then this petition of the Lord's Prayer becomes audible, and it is valid where human help is no longer to be found, assenting to divine providence, as our Lord did in the Garden of Gethsemane: "Father if it is possible, let this chalice pass me by; only as thy will is, not as mine is." How deep into the soul that can cut, how great the measure of suffering, loss, renunciation may be, every believer has experienced once. But he knows just as deeply that the petition does not merely mean we are passively to let come what comes, but that at the crucial moment, praying is also a positive act in the power of God and in his grace and love. A "nevertheless" to everything that happens to us at once brings patent blessing into our suffering.

In these regions we already experience something of the approach to perfection of man in the fulfillment of God's will, a perfection that makes visible the true nobility of God's child. And it is true in this sense that, as we frequently observe, more perfect and holy people have more to suffer than those who are at the beginning of their spiritual life (Teresa of Avila).—But even in times when we are not particularly tempted to assert a contrary self-will, the fulfillment of the divine will is the object of our prayer. It then consists in a total surrender to the Father. We shall throw our whole care onto him and give our-

selves up to his loving-kindness again each time we pray the "Our Father." Indeed, the duties of each moment conceal under their obscure outward appearance the truth of the divine will, they are signs of the divine moment.

The perfection of man, effected as it is by the carrying out of the divine will, is closely connected with the completion of the kingdom of God. Thus several "Our Father" commentaries link the second and third petitions together.—The "thy will be done" petition comes from the kingdom. It does not simply mean that we should do the will of God ourselves, but that it be done everywhere and by all men and all creatures.—God's will and God's kingdom are like warp and woof in weaving. It is often pointed out that the lack of the third petition in St. Luke does not mean a gap in the prayer.—The early Christian commentators in particular are fond of connecting the second and third petitions, will and kingdom, together. Whoever is in the kingdom of God is whole, is hallowed, is "blessed of the Father" and at the same time "a man well pleasing to God," that is, God's will is done him because he does God's will.

Characteristic of mediaeval commentaries is the question of how to know God's will. It is already present in early times, but comes to a head with the great theologians of the 13th century. Later on, with Savonarola for instance, the question emerges in connection with the predominating tendency to see the Lord's Prayer as a course of instruction in contemplation; in Nicholas of Cues it includes the natural world, too.

The "thy will be done" petition has eternity, completion, perfection as its aim, like all the petitions of the "Our Father." That is what St. Augustine meant: "Thy will be done. We want perfection when we pray this." John Chrysostom sees man's true dignity in perfectly carrying out the will of God, and the Fathers of the Eastern Church are fond of pointing to the resemblance to dwellers in heaven which is attained by obedience perfectly performed.

If you lie on my breast and do not do the will of my Father in heaven, I shall tear you away from my breast.

NAZARENE GOSPEL

To believe in him means doing his will.

IRENÆUS OF LYONS

The Church guided by the word of God is a city on earth which cannot be conquered and cannot be subjugated. It is the divine will on earth as it is in heaven.

ORIGEN

The will of God is what Christ does and teaches: humility of conduct, steadiness in faith, reverence in word, in action justice, in social relations mercy, in character, moderation; being unjust to no one at any time, but readily putting up with injustice. Living in peace with our fellow men, loving the Lord with our whole heart, for he is the Father. Fearing him, for he is God.

Preferring Christ to all others, for he too has preferred us to all else. Absolutely depending on his love; bravely and loyally standing by his cross, when trouble flares up because of his name and his honor.

Displaying steadfastness in defending and confessing it, confidence under interrogation and in battle.

In death showing patience through which we shall be crowned, thus witnessing that we would be joint heirs of Christ.

Thus fulfilling God's command, thus fulfilling the will of the Father.

CYPRIAN OF CARTHAGE

If God is really God, then his will has power over all things.

EPHRAIM THE SYRIAN

There is only one true nobility: perfectly to perform the will of God.

JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

In this petition we are not bringing God our good wishes, but we are praying that we may behave in a way pleasing to him, and that we may turn away from our self-will.

Day by day we have to turn our will aside from the passions of this world and secure it to the virtues which have God's favor. Without God's help, however, we cannot do it. That is why we pray for it. We approach the virtues with perfect love and ardently adhere to the desire to carry them out.

THEODORE OF MOPSUESTIA

Thy will be done!—To be perfect is what we want when we pray this.

Thy will be done . . . as in our Lord Jesus Christ, so in the Church too; as in the man who fulfils the will of the Father, so in his wedded wife. For heaven and earth are compared to man and wife because the earth bears fruit when it is fertilized from heaven.

There are two wills: God wills, and you will. Your will has to accord with the divine will; you dare not try to twist God's will round to your own. For your will is awry; the divine will is the rule. This rule should be observed and what is awry should be put right according to the rule.

AUGUSTINE

There can be no greater prayer than to wish that earth and heaven be alike. That is what this petition means, that men will be like the angels. Like the angels in heaven performing God's will, people on earth would wish to do, not their own, but his will entirely. . . . The petition can be explained otherwise too: the will of God is the salvation of all, according to St. Paul's word: "It is his will that all men should be saved, and be led to recognize the truth."

JOHN CASSIAN

The will of God is man's sanctification, for he gave him a share in his kingdom.—If the will of God is fulfilled, then we too have power to act. Only believe, hope, love, then you will be filled with joy. And when you take part in Christ's suffering with a willing heart, then God himself strengthens you in perseverance.

ELISIAS OF ARMENIA

Christ says, in a general and impersonal way: "... be hallowed," "... come," "... let it be done," to show that in every act God and man are necessary. For man needs God and God needs man. For as man can do no good without God, so God does nothing

good in man without man's free will. As the earth cannot produce fruit without seed, nor the seed without the earth, so man without God performs no justice, nor God without man.

ANON., FIFTH CENTURY

It was the will of the Father that the Son should teach, work, suffer, die and rise again, as he said: "It is the will of him who sent me, not my own will, that I have come down from heaven to do." So we must pray that we too shall be considered worthy to teach, to work, to suffer, and to rise in him, so that we may reign with him.

You ask what is God's will. There are the Ten Commandments, in which God's will is proclaimed. There is the Son of God, who knows the will of the Father and reveals what was hidden. So we know God's will. There is no excuse.

VENANTIUS FORTUNATUS

Thy will be powerful over the world,
Here below on earth as it is above,
High in the high kingdom of heaven.

FROM THE "HELIAND"

Some relate the will of the Father to the Person of the Holy Spirit, and the coming kingdom to the Person of Christ.

PASCHASIUS RADBERTUS

Thy will be done
In heaven and on earth;
That we may follow thee on earth
Like the angels of heaven,
Who do not covet,
Lord, what would anger thee.—
And beneath the ruling Spirit
May Flesh lie low in servitude,
so that neither covet
what thou must deny them.
Blessed are the merciful,
their cause is propitious,
this petition points to them.
They have arisen in God
out of the sleep of sin

through the gift of understanding.
 They died to lust of Flesh,
 quickened the works of Spirit,
 gained the blessing of Jacob.
 They harvested the Vision of God;
 having killed the Flesh,
 they will have Victory.

FROM THE CARINTHIAN PATER NOSTER HYMN

It is his utmost will that we live and be saved.

RUPERT VON DEUTZ

Drive self-will out of the world and hell is extinguished.

The will of God has become the will of the angels too. That is the significance of that blessedness, the fount of heavenly bliss, that the divine will has become the will of the angels too. As God is well pleased with the totality of his creation, so are they glad of it all and take pleasure in it all. Therefore, we pray, may this will be done on earth as it is performed among the heavenly creatures. Like the angel, man should depend on God and be of one mind with him. But woe is me, how many obstacles block my path! Weaknesses mount up against it, covetousness and ignorance oppose it. In our nature itself there dwells a strong urge to destroy and a desire to harm, grown still stronger through the corruption of our nature, so that delight in wickedness appears to be ineradicable in our unhappy souls. And what is further from the divine will? Truly in this direction there is an unbridgeable cleft between us and that will. It is ever God's joy to bestow benefits, but thankless we are led astray by a merciless desire to harm even the innocent. . . . Thus our will comes into opposition with the divine will.

BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven: that we may love thee with all our heart, and have thee ever close; with all our soul, thou ever in our desire; with all our mind, directing all our endeavor towards thee and seeking thy honor in all things; with all our strength, dedicating all powers of the soul and all the feelings of the body to the service of thy love alone; and that we may love our neighbor as ourself, drawing all, with what strength we have, to thy love, rejoicing in their good fortune as if it were our own, sharing in their adversity and doing harm to no one.

FRANCIS OF ASSISI

God's will is, first, that we have eternal life. When someone makes something, he does it with a specific end in view. And God did not create man for nothing, as it is written in the 88th Psalm: "Did I create man in vain?" Therefore he created men for a purpose; but not for their lusts—this the beasts have too—but he created them that they might have everlasting life. . . . "It is thus the will of my Father who sent me that whoever sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and that I shall arouse him on the Last Day." This will is already accomplished in the angels and in the saints "yonder," who see God, who know him and enjoy him. . . .

God's will is, further, that we keep his commandments. For when anyone wants something, he wants not only that but everything that helps him to get it. So the doctor who wants to restore health wants diet to be observed and medicine to be taken. But God wants us to have everlasting life. "If thou hast a mind to enter into life, keep the commandments" (Matt. 19: 17). . . . So when we pray, Thy will be done, we pray that we may perform God's commandments. This will of God is done in the just but not in sinners. The just are indicated by "as it is in heaven," the sinners by "on earth." We therefore pray that the will of God be done on earth, that is, in sinners, as it is in heaven, that is, in the just.

Thirdly, God's will is done in us in that we are restored to the state and dignity in which he placed the first created man. The first man was created such that mind and spirit should experience no opposition from nature and senses. Indeed, as long as the mind was subject to God, nature was subject to the spirit, so that it suffered no disturbance through death, sickness or pain. But since spirit and mind, links between God and nature, rose against God in sin, the body too went against the mind and began to feel death and sickness and had to put up with a continuous fight of the senses against the spirit. "I observe another disposition in my lower self, which raises war against the disposition of my conscience, and so I am handed over as a captive to that disposition toward sin which my lower self contains." So when we pray: "Thy will be done," we pray that the will of God be done in our bodies, too.

To him who loves God, God's will is a delight.

The heart of man is set in the right direction, when it accords with the will of God.

If the Lord taught us to pay attention to heaven with the words "thy kingdom come," now he intends that even before we get to heaven, the earth itself should become heaven, when he says: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Error is to be destroyed, truth to be planted, wickedness driven out, and virtue is to return; then heaven will no longer in any way be different from earth.

MASTER ECKHART

Here we pray for the virtue of charity, which consists in full conformity to the will of God. It is also a prayer for the spirit of counsel, by means of which this will shall be discovered, so that we may perform it. That will of God dependent on nothing is always done; we pray, then, that through grace the freedom of our will may associate with his will, that is, our salvation and eternal life. The will of God is the observance of his commandments. In regard to the spirit, we are heaven. In regard to our nature, we are earth. Let us pray, therefore, that God's will be done on earth—that is, in our nature—as it is in heaven—in the spirit, so that spirit and nature together make up spiritual man, as it is written: "The living God! At his name my heart, my whole being, thrills with joy."

RICHARD OF HAMPOLE

Human nature, in which heavenly and earthly things are united, finds in the spirituality of its soul inclinations to immortality, truth and goodness corresponding to the former, an inclination beyond itself towards God; and in its earthly, sensual nature, an inclination downwards to perishable, false, deceptive goods, so that their laws are unlike and contrary.

Therefore Christ teaches us to pray that God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven, that our sensual fleshly nature submit to our reasonable nature and remain united with it in obedience. Whereupon man moves over and above himself, into the heaven of his reason, where God dwells in peace.

NICHOLAS OF CUES

It is from his participation in eternal blessedness in this life that the Christ-Man utters the third petition, imploring for rightness of the will. It is directed to the conformity of our will with the divine will. The petition grows out of the experience of blessed-

ness. Therefore the will of him who has experienced a higher degree of blessedness will be the more in accordance with God's will. And the man illumined with divine light sees, too, in his vision, that the souls of men are the more apt for salvation the more they have placed themselves in conformity with the divine will. So that if a man wants to reach the goal quickly, he must endeavor with all his strength to put his will into conformity with the divine will; he must permit nothing questionable to remain there, so that God's will be done in him, on earth as it is in heaven. Henceforth the flesh will be subject to the spirit through abundance of divine light, so that it does not covet anything opposed to the spirit. Thus, this petition of the "Our Father" shall be fulfilled, and God's will be done on earth, that is, in the flesh, as it is in heaven, that is, in the spirit, as the prophet proclaimed: "The living God! At his name my heart, my whole being thrills with joy."

SAVONAROLA

It is also God's will that we suffer in patience, when he sends us suffering, poverty, affliction, unmerited disgrace, outrage, persecution or something else contrary to us and to our will, and we are on that account in no way angry, impatient and bad-tempered, and do not lose heart, do not curse, do not complain, do not cry out, do not judge, do not condemn, do not perjure ourselves, do not reward evil with evil, nor drive out force with force, but in these and other such cases praise God and thank him who sent us that same cross for the salvation of our souls. This the holy men Job and Tobias also did.

JOHN DIETENBERGER

Father, most holy, most wise, to thee would we lament that our own will is so deep down in us and so often breaks out, hindering us in all goodness and leading us to all evil, and worse, opposing thy loving, holy will. Indeed, we men, beyond the other creatures, should be wholly subject and obedient to thee. Yet we show ourselves, among all visible creatures, so ungrateful and contrary that we set ourselves against thy divine will and sin with pleasure. Therefore, most beloved Father, do away with this wicked will of our own, the source of all evil, and let thy fatherly, steadfast, perfect, salutary will be done in us through us, so that we may hate what is opposed to thee, and bear and suffer what

thou dost put upon us, and finally, at all times, strive wholeheartedly to achieve thy holy will, just as the beloved angels and saints in all earnestness and all delight continually seek thy divine favor in all obedience, and work for it.

PETER CANISIUS

We do not find it easy to ask God not to comply with our desires. It is a difficult attitude of mind to acquire, for in praying thus we seem to be hating ourselves. And all who have fallen a prey to their bodies take it for folly. But we will gladly take this folly upon ourselves for Christ's sake, for he said: "If any man has a mind to come my way, let him renounce self."

This petition contains a thanksgiving, too. For we honor the all-holy will of God, and filled with joy we laud all his works with the highest testimonies of praise and thanksgiving . . . and if we cannot fathom the divine counsel in everything, nonetheless—disregarding our uncertainty and rejecting all hesitation—in everything we repeat the apostle's word: "how indiscoverable are his ways!"

It is a special prerogative of God's children to be so aflame with love and devotion that even when burning with most ardent pains they hardly fear any discomfort or bear it all with the most cheerful equanimity.

ROMAN CATHECHISM

O eternal word, only-begotten Son of God, teach me true magnanimity. Teach me to serve thee as thou dost merit: giving without counting the cost; fighting, untroubled by wounds; working, without seeking rest; sacrificing self, without expecting any reward other than the knowledge of having fulfilled thy holy will.

ASCRIBED TO ST. IGNATIUS

If we are brave and love him dearly, he sends us plenty of pain; do we love him a little, he sends us but a little; for he knows that anyone who loves him much can suffer much for him too, whereas anyone who does not love him much cannot bear much. I am quite convinced that the measure of our capacity to suffer is the measure of our love; great love can bear a large cross, little love a little one.

Thy will be done! Fulfill it in me, O Lord, according to thy

whole pleasure. If thou wilt me to have pain, give me strength to bear it, and then let it come. Dost thou wish it to be persecution, illnesses, defamations, the discomforts of poverty, here am I, O Lord and Father! I shall not shrink away afraid. How could I? Since in this prayer thy Son has offered up with the will of all men my will too, it is only proper that I keep to what was promised in my name. Give thou me, O my God, that kingdom which he desired for me, so that I may be in a position to keep trust. In short, deal with me according to thy pleasure, as with a thing that belongs to thee utterly.

O my sisters, what power is in the surrender of our wills, when it is complete and utter! It has such power over the heart of the All-Highest that it induces him to associate with our lowliness, turn us into himself and thus make one out of creature and Creator.

TERESA OF AVILA

God does not work wonders for us in ways our senses can apprehend. He does not send an angel from heaven to inform you of his will. Still less are private revelations necessary. Apart from quite extraordinary cases, he guides us through the usual channel of his providence.

FRANCIS OF SALES

Self-will never admits it is content, not even when it has everything it wants; but the moment we renounce it, we are contented. If we have got free of it, we cannot be discontented, with it we can never be contented.

BLAISE PASCAL

I wake, I wake, ye heavenly choir,
May your devotion me inspire
That I like you my age may spend,
Like you may on my God attend.

May I like you in God delight,
Have all day long my God in sight,
Perform like you my maker's will,
O may I never more do ill.

THOMAS KEN

Ask not where heaven is, but put your self aside,
 Or else, stay where you are, with heaven far removed.
 To die to your own will and give yourself to God
 Is here below on earth to live with God in heaven.
 And even Christ: were the least self-will in him,
 Blest though he be, believe me, man, he'd fall.

AFTER ANGELUS SILESIVS

This is the true and perfect practice of love, to make one's will identical with the will of God. O our Father in heaven! Yonder thou art truly loved, and thus, happiness yonder consists in performing thy will. What is done in heaven, may it be done on earth, too. What is perfected yonder, may it have a beginning here. This life should not be loved, but borne, said St. Augustine. This is a place of pilgrimage, of need, a place of sighing and weeping.

BOSSUET

Before he had brought forth his creatures, there was no other will but his own. Can we believe that he created reasonable creatures to will otherwise than he wills? No, the highest all-powerful reason, and no other, must illumine them and be their reason; his will, the rule of all good, must will in us; all our wills must compose but one single will with his; on that account we say to him: Thy kingdom come, thy will be done.

Nothing happens, here below no more than in heaven, but according to God's will or with his permission; but men do not love this will, except in so far as it is in accordance with their wishes. Let us love it, let us love it above all things, and we shall make a heaven of the earth. We shall thank God for everything, evil and good, for evil becomes good when he sends it. We shall no longer grumble at the course his providence takes; we shall find it wise and shall bow to it. O God, what do I see in the orbits of the stars, in the succession of the seasons, in the occurrences of life, other than thy will being accomplished? Be it accomplished in me, too; be it kind to me; may it sweeten all things for me; not mine, but thy will be done! For it is thine to will and mine to obey.

Thou, Son of God, didst say: I always do the will of my Father in heaven. Then teach us how far this example must lead us, and whither. Thou art our model. Thou didst do nothing on earth but according to the pleasure of thy Father, who out of grace is called ours, too. Operate in us as in thyself, according to his pleasure.

That we, inseparably united to thee, may only look to his will in all we do. Not alone in praying, instructing, suffering, edifying, but in eating, sleeping, living; may all be done, purely and simply, to please him; then everything in our life is hallowed; then there is constant enduring sacrifice in us; prayer unceasing, love without intermission. O, God, when shall we reach this stage? Of thy mercy bring us so far: subdue and overthrow our recalcitrant will through thy grace; it does not know what it wants; and there is no happiness, neither in heaven nor on earth, but to be as thou wouldst have us be.

FENELON

The prayer does not mean that the will of the Father be done in heaven, but heaven is a model for the earth, where everything is done but that.

J. A. BENDEL

No one is good but the one God! And his will wants but One thing from everlasting to everlasting.

This One thing the will wanted when God once existed in holy repose and solitude and all well-being was enclosed in him, in God. And as God poured himself out into free beings, his will wanted this One thing in all the single free wills, so that the well-being of God might be propagated throughout all beings and everywhere and on every side be concord and full sufficiency.

So wherever there is discord and distress and misery as with us here on earth, there must be private wills in the way, who want otherwise, disturbing that one note of harmony that should sound throughout heaven and earth. And there can be no end to discord, distress and misery unless these private wills change and come back into the one great will.

Thus, to understand the third petition aright, we must know what this will is; and we know little of it or nothing at all. We men usually let our wills be mastered and conquered, most often by apparent and in part very unworthy motives. But examples from ancient and modern times teach and demonstrate the independence and invulnerability of the human will, and each feels in his innermost self that his will can be independent and invulnerable. From this, and from the veneration and respect other people and the laws have for ratifications and agreements, we judge rightly that the will is of a high order of being. And that is as far as we get in our knowledge of the will.

And it is the same with our knowledge of: on earth as in heaven. We do not know heaven and our dreams of it are only remotely approximate. Christ knew the blessedness of heaven where God's will is done. And distress and misery on earth, where God's will is balked, were not unknown to him. Since the foundation of the world was laid, he had made up his mind to come to the rescue, and indeed, now, on earth, to overcome the main obstacle and make it possible for us to tackle individual obstacles and triumph over them, one after another. Discrimination is so tender and gentle a thing, it can brook no compulsion and would offer itself voluntarily, and indeed must do so if it is to function properly. Christ with all his love and mercy could do no more than he has done, and all that was left him was to refer us to the Father himself; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven!

MATTHIAS CLAUDIUS

Thy will, O Lord, be done.
Darkness over the land
And gathering clouds have shown
Thy dread-inspiring hand.

We sinners put our trust
In thy mercy alone.
In deep distress I groan
And bow down in the dust.
Thy will, O Lord, be done!

AFTER JOSEPH VON EICHENDORFF

O my God, I will put myself without reserve into thy hands. Wealth or woe, joy or sorrow, friends or bereavement, honor or humiliation, good report or ill report, comfort or discomfort, thy presence or the hiding of thy countenance, all is good if it comes from thee. Thou art wisdom and thou art love—what can I desire more?—God was all-complete, all-blessed in himself; but it was his will to create a world for his glory. He is almighty, and might have done all things himself, but it has been his will to bring about his purposes by the beings he has created. We are all created to his glory—we are created to do his will. I am created to do something or to be something for which no one else is created; I have a place in God's counsels, in God's world, which no one else has; whether I be rich or poor, despised or esteemed by man, God knows me

and calls me by my name.—He has not created me for naught. I shall do good, I shall do his work; I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place, while not intending it, if I do but keep his commandments and serve him in my calling.—I am born to serve thee, to be thine, to be thy instrument. Let me be thy blind instrument. I ask not to see—I ask not to know—I ask simply to be used.

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN

“If anyone does the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister and mother.” So that to attain to the happy state of having Jesus as Brother and most intimate Friend, we must fulfill the Father’s will.

Well now, what does this will consist in?—It consists in avoiding sin and, should we succumb to our weaknesses, in promptly begging forgiveness. Further, in offering up to him all we do. He is so good, he accepts even the smallest thing we offer him.—You know your obligations: hallow them by dedicating them to God!

D. COLUMBA MARMION

Whether we are suffering or consoled is not important, if we are only in God’s will. More and more magically am I drawn by this holy will, and less and less do I see the difference between suffering and rejoicing; the one important thing for me is the Father’s will.

The one thing necessary is to remain in conformity with his will at every moment.

To be nothing more than his living will, that is my life, my whole peace, my whole happiness.

We want to do honor to the will of our great God in worship! He is continually worthy of praise, but most of all when he threatens to abolish our hopes, our dearest hopes, those which we cherished only for his glory, for he is worshipful above all things! He knows better than we do what is to his glory.

CONSUMMATA

How God’s kingdom will come about is answered in the third petition, that is, through observance of the commands which are contained in the two main commandments.—Christian love of neighbors is none other than the display of a living, active, all-embracing love of God.

ALBERT EHRHARD

The will of God is the will to himself. It is the indispensable and inalienable confirmation of divine existence and assent to it. It is the last word of the soliloquy of the divine life, a powerful Amen to its eternal liturgy.

PETER LIPPERT

The will of God in the world goes equally veiled through past and present, perceptible in each and all, and yet full of obscurity, embracing all and yet hidden in itself and in its mystery. "God's will moves silently over earthly dissension." (W. Raabe.)

ERNEST LOHMEYER

Then, when the earth has become a mirror to heaven, then, when the kingdom of God on earth has become a real province of the kingdom of heaven, then, in the degree to which this occurs, the hallowing of God's name of Father, the Father's kingdom on earth, is assured.

The carrying out of the third petition is thus the way which leads to the goal, which Jesus made a subject of prayer for his disciples and those who belong to him. It points out the route along which they must march if they want to reach the goal which Jesus set before them in the two first petitions, and this route is: the will of the Father, unconditionally and unreservedly, as it is in heaven. . . . It is the Father's will that men should be in Jesus children of his love, that in life with his Son they create a place in which his infinite fatherly love can take effect, in themselves and in the community of those who compose the Father's family.

The will of the Father is a will to salvation, and this petition is, of course, not only concerned that it should be dominant in Jesus' disciples (in the widest sense), for it is to reign supreme among all men all the world over. That as many people as possible may recognize and love God as their Father; that in the kingdom of his grace and love they find a home, and embrace in him the fatherly will to salvation with unreserved loyalty: that is what we pray for, when we say, as Christ told us to: Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

THADDÄUS SOIRON

It is true, this petition will never find complete fulfillment here on earth. Thus it has a strong eschatological note. It expresses the

longing for that point in history when all the barriers and restrictions which the sinful will of man sets up against God's sovereignty will cease to be.

The will of God is, simply, for us, what is to happen. It is to take shape in the normal interplay of natural forces; it is to emerge from a man's work and from freedom of the spirit; and thus the world is to become as he intended it—that is what the will of God is. The will of God is the perfection of his creation, where man is placed with his freedom.

The will of God not only challenges, it also functions. It is the particular way God warns, impels, assists, supports, works, shapes, wrestles, conquers and completes his work in me. The will of God is the power which makes it possible for me to carry out what he requires of me. Seen in this light, it has another name: it is called grace. So when the will of God is done, it is the gift and work of this very will, and it is my work, mine through his, and his in me, and it is all a mystery of unity.

ROMANO GUARDINI

Thy will is the glorification of the cross; thy will be done. People in whom the cross lives can but conquer; they cannot be defeated. Through them the cross conquers in history. But not till the end will the crosses shine out, when the light of the Day of Judgment falls upon the battle field. Perhaps the field will be more fully occupied than we suspect, and many tombs that we thought were closed over hopeless cases may bear the sign of victory. Even the opposition between heavenly order and human history contains its hidden cross; and wherever we meet that nerve-racking discrepancy between thy order and human prescriptions, the cross is present and ready to ransom us. With the cross the glory of heaven was dug down deep into the earth; everything that happens is engaged in effecting this glory; and sin and pain are effective too. Today it is still hidden, but tomorrow, on thy day of coming, it shall be revealed.

REINHOLD SCHNEIDER

"... and carry thee where thou goest, not of thine own will" (John 21:18). Lord, I would go where I go not of mine own will.

HANS URS VON BALTHASAR

There is for us no other way of coming together, finding peace,

and being a Church of God. As nature sets us off in life with a self-seeking will, we might well say of her, she is the mother of dissension, and strife is her sign. Yet in creating dissension she simply reveals God's patience.

But he who came to us through God's grace assembles the community and creates peace; not by taking our will away from us, but by making it to be our will that God's will be done.

ADOLF SCHLATTER

The third petition of the Lord's prayer expresses not only submission but consent to the world-wide doing of God's will, corresponding to the glorifying of his name and the coming of his reign. It requires an ultimate, fundamental attitude in praying. It exactly concurs with the prayer of the Son in Gethsemane (Matt. 26:42). If there, in the Passion, it explicitly stands for willing submission, we have here a prerequisite for that fundamental attitude. According to Mark 3:35 and Matthew 12:50, it is required of Jesus too, for Jesus himself is wholly and completely rooted in God's will and lives in it.

GOTTLÖB SCHRENK

Be brave and steady-hearted, dare to ponder on our Lord's petition "thy will be done": then you will never take it for a word of escape into weakness, and never for merely a word of flinching foreknowledge concerning earthly death.

To take it in that sense is to be still far from the miracle of the Mount of Olives, our Lord's starting point for conquering death and turning the will-to-live into eternal life in God. For, to the consolation of us all, "on earth as it is in heaven" can only stand for the working of a law that counts our heartbeats into the eternal clock-work of creation, and equally, carries over the breathing of our souls into the holy breathing of divine Being and divine forbearance.

FRIEDRICH BISCHOFF

If we can think of nothing serious to pray about, in order not to come short of God's holy will we can equip ourselves for what is coming by means of this petition. For no one knows what is awaiting him tomorrow. But anyone who has prayed for God's will and accepted it in advance will not need so long to find peace and strength in this will.

EUGEN WALTER

No petition of the "Our Father" can so mislead us into thinking we should submit passively to the Father's will as the petition, Thy will be done. But the Father's will is that we *ourselves* should be actively willing beings, such that the Christ-will will awake in us and become more and more potent.

What is frequently called submission to the will of God absolutely presupposes human will-power. In this submission it is simply a matter of assenting to the successive stages of the passion in our personal life, and it is good to know this and to desire it.

BERNARD MARTIN

How often, O my Master, have I said, "Our Father who art in heaven?" It has been on my lips since childhood. When was it ever truly in my heart? I have often said "Thy will be done." How often have I at once said it and truly meant it? Have I not meant, "Thy will be mine—bend things to my will?"

Bend my stubborn will, my Master. Make my lips truthful. May my prayer be a prayer of petition.

May I desire what I say I desire; and may I desire as first what thou hast put first—at the head of all our desires. Thy Will; Thy Kingdom; and the hallowing of Thy Name.

VINCENT MCNABB

The Son, who has a working day just as we do, and who knows of the capacity of our day, places not only his own day, but ours too, at the heart of the Father's will, which is so large that nothing in our day is too small to be an appearance and fulfilment of this will. And he lets us worship the will of the Father and desire its accomplishment before we know what it is going to involve. He lets us blindly want the unknown will of the Father to be done in us. He lets us obediently promise, without the limitation of a condition; he lets us accept as our own will the will of the Father as he knows it, great and ineffable as it is. He lets our will disappear in the will of the Father, as his own will does. And he lets us utter with him that incomprehensible petition, that the Father would through him have his will realized on earth, where we sinners are, as it is in heaven, where his saints do it.

ADRIENNE VON SPEYER

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD

There is no doubt that when Our Lord first prayed the "Our Father" for his disciples, by bread he meant the bread to feed us bodily. But the supernatural, spiritual nature of his Person and teaching, and his earlier utterances about bread, especially in St. John's Gospel, leave us no doubt whatever that the petition meant, from the very first, spiritual food too. And the miracle of the loaves and fishes, was, at one and the same time, bodily food to satisfy natural hunger, and a symbolic act with reference to the supernatural nourishment that fosters the growth of the human spirit.

Thus, from the very beginning, in all "Our Father" commentaries, we find a double meaning for the bread petition. Altogether it is the petition least affected by temporal influences and changes in popular devotion. If here and there the commentaries seem to overlook one aspect, and some of those cited here take bread mainly as physical nourishment, or on the other hand, as the bread of doctrine, or Eucharistic bread, the other aspect is nonetheless always present, though latent. What is not said can also carry weight. The explanatory texts are all analytical of the divine word, like prisms dividing sunlight into the colors of the rainbow. We know that artists have individual predilections in regard to colors, and in the same way, individual commentators of the divine word consider it each from his own angle, possibly overlooking the other aspects. The reader will quickly observe which aspect of bread any given author has in mind.

Two phrases of this petition have again and again been the subject of comment: "this day" and "daily." If each is taken in a strictly temporal sense, "this day" seems redundant at first sight. For if bread is received daily, there will be some for to-day. It might be there simply for emphasis. But "daily" is much

more difficult to explain. It has been taken as meaning "day by day" or "for tomorrow"; or conversely, "substantial" or "supra-real," after the Greek word of the original text. But this could only mean the Eucharist. Another explanation is quantitative; "daily" would be quite comprehensible if the petition meant something like: Give us this day our bread, sufficient for one day. And this echoes our Lord's own admonishment not to trouble to lay in stores: "Do not fret then over tomorrow; leave tomorrow to fret over its own needs; for today, today's troubles are enough." (Matt. 6:34). In this context, "daily" would not be at all redundant.

But before we begin to think in terms of storing or not storing, the wording itself induces another line of thought, obvious in itself, and moreover touching on a fundamental Christian truth: the fact that we are to *ask* God for our bodily needs. Did he not himself command our first parents—and through them, us—to till the soil and by dint of sheer hard work to feed themselves from it? And as the apostle added, he who will not work shall not eat. Mankind has always, through the ages, been bound by this, the young learn from their elders, as part of their general education, the necessity of working "in the sweat of their brow." Every child has to discover that to pray for daily bread is not to have the table suddenly spread, but that only trouble and work, and often trouble over work, enable a man to eat his fill daily and to call his house his own, and much else besides, as the case may be.—So that what he owns and what he may use is indeed due to his own exertions, and the work of his own hands has produced what is there for the family to enjoy on festivals, in sickness, and in old age. Indeed it is his own doing! Yet in spite of the toil and trouble that went into it, it is not his own, but purely a gift from God. For of what use is it for him to plough and till, to sow and irrigate, if power from on high does not make the seed germinate or stalks and ears of corn grow and ripen? "Vain is the builder's toil, if the house is not of the Lord's building; vainly the guard keeps watch, if the city

has not the Lord for its guardian."—The truth is, nothing grows of itself from human labor alone, but all is a gift of God.

The bread petition has to be seen in this double light: man working with all his might and yet admitting he is a useless servant, aware that he receives everything as a favor from the Father. God's favor is available to those who pray to him, and so we pray in the "Our Father" for our daily bread. Both are important, labor and prayer, and it is a mark of the complete standard Christian to have created a living harmony between concern for God's kingdom and the acquisition and enjoyment of the good things of this world.

There is still more to be said—the petition is an inexhaustible treasurehouse. Sinners and pagans have bread too; they do not pray for it, and many do not work for it and yet they often have it more abundantly than those who toil and pray. Here, the bread petition shows up the tension that exists in the Christian faith, and the fact is that the Christian receives his bread from God's hand in faith. It is not to be had from any other hand. Or else bread and earthly possessions become a curse. In the 18th chapter of the Apocalypse, St. John describes the fall and ruin of the city of Babylon, the abode of devils, the stronghold of unclean spirits. The merchants of the earth had grown rich through her reckless pleasures. She offered for selling and marketing wares that could be termed "luxuries," the opposite of "daily bread" which does not cover superfluous things or luxuries of any kind, but only life's necessities. Whoever accepts goods from the hands of the harlot does not receive daily bread from the hand of God. But the sale of wares that serve pleasure-seeking, ambition, greed, immorality, leads on to further consequences, bringing confusion into the economic world, creating a state of disorder, where some grow rich while others starve. When in one hemisphere great quantities of wheat are burned to maintain a monopoly and keep prices up while people in the other hemisphere go hungry, we have obviously to do with a grave offense against the moral order. The words of the

prayer refer to *our* bread, not my bread, and show that what is necessary is for all in common. When a man has no direct responsibility for economic disorder, and may even be a victim of it, he is nonetheless bound to offer the economic situation to God in prayer, and thus to hallow it. But apart from that, the petition requires of each one of us to be kind and generous to the poor and needy. Receiving bread from the Father's hand is like getting a present, and it serves for whatever is needed; what man receives over and beyond this is on loan, and is not intended to be stored up or even used for usury, and no one has the right to lay complete and absolute claims to it.

Here again we find one of those productive tensions which reason and faith solve together, to the greater harmony of Christian living. The same is true of the measure of what is necessary for life. Plans and education, profession and status, circumstances—climatic and sociological—will determine what food, clothing, accommodation and hours of work are necessary. We know today, with millions of homeless refugees, that more is needed to make existence humanly possible than a roof, a day's ration of food and a piece of clothing. There must be a quiet place where people can sit down and think, pray and read, or carry on private conversation.

Many commentaries on this fourth petition refer to the law of simplicity and sufficiency (Gregory of Nyssa, Richard of Hampole, Alban Stolz, Cardinal Faulhaber).—Very early witnesses, such as the "Kerygma Petri" and the "Christian Sibyls," draw attention to its social content, which in the nineteenth century and in our own day has gained enormously in importance. Others stress trust in divine providence for what is necessary for existence (Cyprian, Francis of Sales, Guardini), and again the thought occurs that Christians receive bread from the hands of their heavenly Father by asking for it.

From the beginning, it was clear that the petition meant the spiritual bread of doctrine as well as the Holy Eucharist. The commentaries often cite Jesus' saying that man does not live by

bread alone but by the word that comes out of the mouth of God, and that he himself is the living bread come down from heaven to give life to the world. Certain elucidations take the two-fold nature of man, body and soul, as their starting-point; both become the prey of decay and death without nourishment (Hugo of St. Victor, Nicholas of Cues).—Bread becomes sublime through its use in the Eucharistic Sacrifice. The Lord chose bread and wine as his and our sacrificial offerings to be used as symbols for the renewal of his sacrifice on the cross. In deep symbolic vision the Spanish poet Calderon saw the Bread of the Eucharist as the Body of our Lord sacrificed on the Cross. But the sinners who gather and eat the fruit of this tree of the cross are bathed in the miraculous brightness of eternal salvation.—To partake of Eucharistic Bread is to be put on the road to salvation and sanctification in earthly life and to be given a pledge of eternal life.

And what bright light falls from the holy Bread upon our food for daily use! The bread petition becomes all the more personal and urgent for its reference to our eternal life, which is far more purely a gift of grace than our earthly life and its sustenance. Communion with God in the lowly form of the bread, union with the Lord who bestows on us supernatural, spiritual growth, is such an immense miracle that small, guilt-laden, infirm man trembles to ask for it. Of himself he dare not do it; only because our Lord puts the words in his mouth dare he utter them. "The mouth of Jesus crucified has become our mouth, and through him we call upon the Father, to appease his anger," said St. Ambrose. Mysteriously, the fourth petition points on to the fifth, and the prayer for Eucharistic bread will also be a prayer for purity and worthiness, as though with our petition for daily bread we were also praying that we might receive the holy Body of Jesus Christ worthily. For from very ancient times the "Our Father" was a prayer of preparation for Communion, uniting with the prayers of the Canon in praying: Let not the partaking of thy Body turn against me into judg-

ment and damnation, but through thy loving-kindness let it be for me a safeguard of mind and body. . . .

The name we give our supernatural, spiritual bread recalls us to our obligation to give thanks for earthly bread too: Eucharistia means thanksgiving. The early Church often celebrated the Eucharistic sacrifice in connection with a real meal, "agape," meaning "love-feast." The thanksgiving prayer of the "Didache," the oldest Christian catechism, marks the passage from the Eucharistic to the earthly feast in lovely symbolism. —At every Eucharist the Church gives thanks to the heavenly Father in the high prayer before the Consecration, thanks for the incarnation and sacrifice of his Son, and for the visible signs, the gifts of bread and wine. But if thanksgiving for heavenly gifts is right, just and proper, it is so for the earthly gifts of food and drink too. "To pray for bread is to give thanks for bread," as a contemporary Christian puts it. So that grace at meals should always be a continuation of the fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer, and at the same time a thanksgiving for the gifts of the table, which in the course of the Lord's year, *anno domini*, at Harvest Thanksgiving will be solemnly presented by the whole community. And just as blessing and thanksgiving are said over daily meals and over the fruits of the field, it is natural to dedicate to God everything we use in preparing our daily bread, in the broadest sense possible, and give thanks here too, and pray for the grace to make the right use of what is given, in view of eternity. House and homestead, tools and places of work, and even useful technical products: the true Christian will submit them all to the almighty Father for his blessing.

Every earthly meal is an image of the Eucharistic feast in which the Blood of the Lord is shed and his Body sacrificed. Is there not some trace of Christ's sacrifice in every meal, when care is taken in cooking and serving it?—And the Eucharistic feast anticipates the eternal feast of joy, which is the life of blessedness where the Lord is at table with his chosen friends to drink the cup of joy and salvation with them. A reflection from

the splendor of the feast in heaven should fall on our earthly meals, and the poet Matthias Claudius gives touching expression to this joy with his loving thought for the children.

Faith in the providence of God the Father, who feeds the birds of the air and clothes the flowers of the field, though they neither sow nor reap, nor work, and whose hand is outstretched over our life too, should extend to the spiritual life as well. The holy Eucharist is the source of our trust in right guidance. Here the Christian puts himself completely at Christ's disposal, through union with him in his soul. The sum of the instructions on the Eucharistic character of the fourth petition covers a vast field of inquiry, so rich is the scope of these few, plain words. Augustine and Ambrose find in the words "this day" and "daily" reason to advocate daily reception of Holy Communion, which the Popes Pius X, Pius XI and Pius XII have again warmly commended.—In Irenæus, Elisias of Armenia and Cyprian, the life-nourishing element in the Eucharist and increase of spiritual growth occupy the foreground of their considerations. As earthly bread sustains and promotes bodily life, so does Eucharistic Bread confer eternal life and immortality. And the whole idea of Christ's Body in this connection profoundly justifies the social character attributed to the fourth petition. Augustine, and earlier still, the Didache, have the lovely comparison of earthly bread, made into a whole out of many grains, with heavenly Bread, the Body of our Lord, consisting of many members, a unity of prayer, action and love, and effective as such.

As for thanksgiving, this is how you should give thanks: First over the cup, We give thee thanks, our Father, for the holy vine of David, thy servant, which thou didst make known to us through Jesus, thy Servant. Glory be to thee forever.—Over the broken bread, say: We give thee thanks, our Father, for life and the knowledge thou hast made known to us through Jesus, thy Servant. Glory be to thee forever. As this broken bread was scattered over the mountains, and was gathered together as one, so from the ends

of the earth shall thy Church be gathered together in thy kingdom. For thine is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ forever.

And when you have eaten your fill, this is how you should give thanks: We give thee thanks, holy Father, for thy holy name, for thou hast obtained that it dwell in our hearts, and for knowledge and faith and immortality which thou dost make known to us through Jesus, thy servant. Glory be to thee forever. Thou, almighty Lord, hast made all things for thy name's sake and hast given men food and drink for their enjoyment, so that they should give thee thanks. But to us thou hast given spiritual food and drink and everlasting life through thy servant. Above all we give thee thanks that thou art mighty. Glory be to thee forever. Remember, O Lord, thy Church. Deliver it from all evil and perfect it in thy love, and gather it, the holy one, from the four winds into thy kingdom which thou hast prepared for it, for thine is the power and the glory forever. May glory come, may this world vanish. Hosanna to the Son of David—*Maran atha!* Amen.

FROM THE DIDACHE

He is rich who is merciful to many and taking God as his model gladly distributes what he has of his own. For God has given all to all out of what was created, which is his own. Therefore remember, ye rich men, that what you have received beyond your need should be put to the service of others. Think: what you have in superfluity, others lack. Be ashamed to keep what is alien. Emulate God's goodness.

KERYGMA PETRI

If riches come your way, stretch out your hand to the poor.

FROM THE CHRISTIAN SIBYLS

Without the support of any created thing whatever, the Lord could undoubtedly have provided the wedding guests with wine and the hungry with food. But he did not do it, instead, he took this bread which comes from the earth and gave thanks, and all who had sat down ate their fill. And again, he made wine out of water and gave it to the wedding guests to drink. By this means he showed that the same God who had created the earth and commanded it to produce fruit, who founded the waters and unsealed the springs, here too, in recent days, through his Son bestows bless-

ing on the food and grace on the drink of the human race, giving the inapprehensible through the apprehensible, and the invisible through the visible.

IRENÆUS OF LYONS

To the just, daily nourishment can hardly be lacking, for it is written: "Still the Lord gives honesty a full belly" (Prov. 10:3). Likewise the Lord says: "Do not fret, then, asking, What are we to eat? what are we to drink? how shall we find clothing? It is for the heathen to busy themselves over such things; you have a Father in heaven who knows that you need them all" (Matt. 6:31).—Through divine providence Daniel was brought a meal, the man of God was fed in the midst of the wild beasts. Elias was fed on his flight and in his solitude.

This petition can be understood both spiritually and literally. For both explanations contain a divine purpose and serve salvation. The Bread of Life is Christ, and this Bread is not for all, but only for us. Just as we pray: "Our Father," because he (Christ) is the Father of those who acknowledge him and believe in him, so too we say: "Our Bread," for Christ is the Bread of those who, like us, dare to touch his Body. But we pray that this Bread may be ours daily so that we who are in Christ, and daily receive his Eucharist as food, may not be separated from the Body of Christ.

CYPRIAN OF CARTHAGE

We were charged to say to God: "Give us our bread," and in this manner simply to pray for what is sufficient to sustain bodily life, not for opulence and wealth, not for resplendent robes of purple, not for golden jewelry and glistening gems, not for silver, not for an over-abundance of landed property, not for the high command of massed armies, not for rule over cities and peoples, not for herds of horses and cattle or for great quantities of other livestock, not for an over-abundance of slaves, not for a splendid appearance in public places, not for memorial columns, not for silken cloth, not for musical treats for the ears, or anything of that sort, whereby the soul may be distracted from the incomparably more important endeavor to come to God, but only for our daily bread.

Can you perceive the depth of wisdom and the fund of instruction that this short word contains? Quite openly the Lord is calling to almost all who care to understand it: stop making difficulties!

It is little that you really need, as far as your human nature is concerned.

GREGORY OF NYSSA

If it is daily bread, why do you take it only after a year has gone by, as the Greeks in the east are accustomed to do? Receive it daily, for it is of daily use to you. Live in such a manner that you are worthy to receive it daily! Whoever is not worthy to receive it daily is not worthy to receive it after a year either. Surely you hear that as often as the sacrifice is offered, the death of the Lord, the resurrection of the Lord, the ascension of the Lord are shown in symbols and the forgiveness of sins is assured—and yet you do not receive this Bread of Life daily? Anyone with a wound seeks medicine for it. It is a wound of ours, that we are under sin. The medicine is the heavenly and venerated Sacrament.

AMBROSE

When we pray God to grant us that choice and excellent bread, we beg for him who said: I am the living Bread that has come down from heaven.

JEROME

The Eucharist is our daily bread!

Receive and eat the Body of Christ, yourself becoming in Christ's Body a member of Christ. Receive and drink Christ's Blood. Do not break apart again, eat the bond of your unity. Know your dignity, drink your ransom. As this is transformed in you when you eat and drink it, so are you transformed in Christ's Body, when you behave devoutly and obediently. By obtaining life in him, you are in one nature with him. For this mystery of Christ's body does not mean that it separates you from it. The apostle points out that this was foretold in Scripture: "The two become one flesh" (Gen. 2:24). And then he says of the Eucharist itself: "The one bread makes us one body, though we are many in number" (Cor. 10:17). Now begin to receive what you began to be.

AUGUSTINE

Some think it is unsuitable, and unworthy of saints, to pray to God for earthly things. So they interpret the petition in a wholly spiritual way, and then say they are not begging for earthly, not for bodily bread, but rather for that bread which comes from

heaven and gives life to the world, or, as they say, bread for the true, bodiless being, the soul. Now, it is most proper for saints to desire and strive after the spiritual gifts of grace. But the petition for ordinary bread, as the Savior commanded it, is most praiseworthy too. For this meaning is contained in the words of the prayer. The Lord gave the command to pray for daily nourishment because saints possess nothing, because they are poor. For the prayer is not a thing for property-owners, but for the poor.

CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA

Immortal bread is laid in mortal hands, and soon those hands will be immortal too. The whole man will be spiritualized through eating it, with mind, soul and body, and will share in Christ. . . . Then there is no more earthly affliction that can overcome him. What is of the world will be seen as pain, for his thinking was sanctified toward heavenly freedom because he was fed on immortal bread.

ELISIAS OF ARMENIA

We do not only pray in order to obtain necessary food, but in order to receive our food from God's hand. For the just and sinners equally get food, indeed sinners often have more than the just. But to receive food from God's hand is not equally available to both, but only to the saints. The words of the prayer do not therefore forbid the laying in of stores, but only doing it sinfully.

ANON., 5TH CENTURY

Not all receive the same "daily bread," but each according to his capacity, according to the way "living Bread" imparts Himself.

MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR

Give us this day our daily bread. That means, give us thy doctrine, with which our souls are fed. They need it daily, just as the body needs bread.

NOTKER OF ST. GALL

The bread we need daily in order not to succumb by the way-side on our journey, is the spiritual food of the soul, the love that flows from God's sweetness, and the most pleasant taste that comes into the soul to quicken it from time to time. "How gracious the Lord is! taste and prove it." In the power of the manna the true Israel will be led through the deserts of this world till it reach

the promised land and have its fill of the sweetness of God's presence.

HUGO OF ST. VICTOR

The servant of God must care for his body sensibly in regard to food, drink, sleep and other physical necessities, so that Brother Body does not grumble, saying: I can no longer stand upright and apply myself to prayer, nor, so afflicted in feeling, can I be joyful and perform other good works, because thou dost not satisfy my needs.

FRANCIS OF ASSISI

O unprecedented honoring of Christ, O wonderful jubilation of the spirit! The reward of the saints, the joy of angels, the Word of God the Father is my nourishment. The Light of the world, the Sun of the firmament, the Wisdom of God is the refreshment of my soul. The Virgin's scion, man's redemption, the glory of heaven has become my food. What do I desire, beyond this? What can still attract me? Far be it from my heart, O Lord, having enjoyed such precious food, to be drawn to anything else, whatever the whole world contain. I ask, how can my heart that has had the most precious, most satisfying, most exquisite food tendered it, still find pleasure in vanity, infamy, impurity? I ask, how can my heart let itself be separated for a moment from this precious food?—Thou alone, good Jesus, be my food and my quickening.—What is sweeter than thou? What more pleasant? what is more deserving of love than thou, good Jesus?—Today, Lord, give us this bread, so that we may have it present and keep it ever present. May this food be ever present, at least spiritually, and never may it be only past or future. But *today*, thou sayest, good Jesus, so that we may say: Why dost thou hurry so to be with us? Why dost thou not leave it till tomorrow? What dost thou see in us? Why art thou so drunk with our love? What dost thou gain through us? What fruit wouldst thou enjoy in us, that thou cannot delay? Does our love so press on thee that thou wilt not put it off, although thou hast no gain from it? For we are but thy most unworthy creatures.—But thou art drunk with our love and we with thine. The immensity of love draws thee so to hasten to us and us to thee, so that when all delaying is set aside the embrace is mutual and our soul expires in thy arms, reft aloft in a glow of love.

BONAVENTURA

In the fourth petition we pray too, in secret, for the gift of strength, and yearn for justice, which is, in other words, to hunger for justice. Through the gift of strength and through hunger for justice, melancholy is banned, it was due, it seems, to nothing other than a glutting with goods, whereby man is impeded and does not attain to perfection. When melancholy is banned, we shall be filled with the goods of God's house, as it is written: "When thy glory dawns, I shall be well content," and again, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for holiness; they shall have their fill."

PHILIP OF RATHSAMHAUSEN

Observe that with these words we pray for bread, not for meat, fish, sweetmeats, not for superfluous things, but only for what is necessary. And when we say "our," not "mine," what is meant is that the good things God bestows on us are for all who need them, in common, and may not be apportioned to us alone. Avaricious hoarding is to be condemned, when a man keeps what he has for himself.

RICHARD OF HAMPOLE

Notice that Christ is our bread for use on our road to him; he will give himself to us in his essence, his wisdom and his goodness, in the measure we are able to receive him in this temporal state. But these bodily eyes of ours cannot see God in this world of the senses, for he is immortal, and since his resurrection, invisible for mortal eyes, on account of his all-penetrating and all-embracing spiritual translucence; but on account of this nature he is spiritual food for our souls. That is why on this earthly journey of ours Christ is given us under the appearance of bread, for we cannot see him with our physical sight but only with the eyes of faith. And thus Christ is truly present under the form of bread in the Host, and all the seeing, touching, tasting, smelling our senses are capable of is not able to apprehend the true Body of Christ, but only the physical sign or Host, in which the Body is present and where it is seen by reason of faith alone. This is the most high gift which God has given us wayfarers as food, till we leave this world of the senses and come to the heaven of true insight, where we shall behold Christ no more veiled in the Host and not in faith, but in truth, as he is.

Man has two natures, soul and body, and each must live on its

appropriate food and by means of the bread suitable for it. And neither can live without bread, for we are wayfarers and pilgrims on the earth. The soul needs spiritual bread, for strength when it is made weak by sin, and as support when it must take its departure. "Such is the living bread which has come down from heaven." And it must escort us, and escort us back (to heaven), if we wish our souls to regain health. This bread God could not take from Adam, for he was damned. He and all his progeny were mortal men and doomed to die. So that if we are to come to grace and eternal life again, God has to take on human nature, so that men may be united with God and be an intermediary between God and man.

NICHOLAS OF CUES

Give us this day our daily bread. Kind heavenly Father, our only Creator, upon whom the eyes of all things rest, hoping continually that thou wilt give them their food: accord us here in this life as much temporal bodily goods as we need for the proper sustenance of our bodily life, and bodily strength and power to accomplish thy service and good works always and in good order.

Give us this day our daily bread. That precious most worthy Bread who said of himself: "I am the living bread that came down from heaven." Grant, dear Lord, that we may daily receive the most venerated sacrament of the true Body of our Lord in a spiritual manner, with the precious fruits and graces which thy dear friends receive from it, and grant that we may always truly receive this and the other sacraments when we prepare to do so and ought to do so.

Give us this day our daily bread. That we may often be spiritually fed and consoled through the teaching of Holy Scripture, through hearing God's holy word, through the contemplation and consideration of thy perfection, through the prayerful consideration of the countless good things thou hast bestowed on us, and through longing for heavenly joys.

HENRY OF HESS AND
NICHOLAS OF DINKELSBÜHL

The just, who were raised to such high honor through contemplation, make nothing of earthly things, but they choose a quite simple way of life and are content with little and with quite indifferent things. Indeed, the more perfect they have become

through contemplation, the more simple is the life they lead, and they can now only find joy in heavenly food, in holy scripture, in the liturgy, in the holy things with which they daily have to do, and of which they can never sufficiently have their fill. They flee from men, they despise the crowds of the cities. They take to the green pastures of everlasting life, and daily pray to their Lord, saying: "Give us this day our daily bread."

SAVONAROLA

Under natural, bodily bread, without which the old Adam cannot live, you are to understand all bodily nourishment and necessities which belong to this temporal life and are necessary to all according to estate, nature, constitution, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, homestead, cattle, field, vineyard, meadow, money, property, a pious mate, pious children, faithful servants, pious and just superiors, good government, propitious weather, peace, health, good friends, peaceful trustworthy neighbors—for all this we need for sustenance and the abundant enjoyment of our daily bodily bread. God does not wish that we should pray for a great store for ten or twenty years ahead, nor even for a year or a month, such as miserly people lay in, but what is required for the present time according to need; and therefore we pray daily for our daily bread.

JOHN DIETENBERGER

God commanded us, not simply to pray to obtain what we eat, for this is common to the just and sinners alike, but that we receive what we eat from God's hand. This only applies to the just, to whom God gives bread that he prepares in justice. But he is no son of God, and he prays amiss, who begs for riches and does not receive from God's hand, that is, not in justice, but only by theft, robbery, cunning and injustice.

JOHN WILD

If in the words "our daily bread" our Lord prays for eternal bread for us forever, why does he say at the same time, "give it us today?" Daughters, I believe the divine Master wanted us to understand by the word "daily" that beyond the happiness of possessing this bread of life on earth, we shall have it in heaven too, if we only know how to make use of the extraordinary grace he accords us by dwelling among us. For he only remained with us to be our stand-by, to support us and so to strengthen our soul

through this divine nourishment that it may fulfill the will of his Father.

TERESA OF AVILA

The faithful should not be content to receive the Lord's Body only once a year; indeed, frequent reception of Holy Communion should be their heart's desire. Just as they find it inevitable to give the body its nourishment day by day, so they should not let their soul wither, but bring it new nourishment daily by means of this sacrament.

The sacrament of the altar unites us with Christ and lets us participate in his body and in his divinity. And it also unites us and binds us together in Christ and combines us into one body. For we should know how unworthy of the name of Christians are those who nurse enmities; and hatred, dissension, discord must be wholly extirpated as the worst plague. Indeed we confess in the celebration of the holy sacrifice that there is nothing we want to safeguard more zealously than peace and love.

ROMAN CATECHISM

Poor beggars that we are, having no good in us of ourselves, however rich and fortunate we may be, we often know much want and misery, and must suffer all sorts of threats and damages to our property, our honor, our body and soul. We come and implore thee, O rich and kind Father, faithful Helper in the hour of need, who dost feed all the beasts in due time and keep them alive. Grant us what we need, sustenance of body and soul, for thou knowest best when and where and what all and each of us is in need of. We do not ask thee for great riches and superfluity, and we will not think of tomorrow's cares but we pray only for our daily bread and necessary nourishment, so that we may not go hungry and be prevented from doing service to our neighbor. We pray, too, for the spiritual food of holy Christian doctrine, and the sacraments with their riches of grace, that these may contribute to our consolation and the welfare of our minds. With these may thy fatherly loving-kindness take care of us weak, silly children, body and soul, and feed, sustain, protect and guard us.

PETER CANISIUS

The bread does not feed you. What feeds you in the bread
Is God's eternal word, is life, and is spirit.

ANGELUS SILESIVS

O dear memorial of the death
Which lives still, and allows us breath!
Rich, royal food, bountiful *bread*,
Whose use denies us to the dead;
Whose vital gust alone can give
The same leave both to eat and live;
Live ever, Bread of loves, and be
My life, my soul, my surer self to me.

RICHARD CRASHAW

Thou our Father, what is this bread? It is not only the means by which thy providence provides for the necessities of our life; it is that true nourishment which thou dost daily dispense to the soul; it is a bread that nourishes for eternal life, making the soul grow and be strong in trials of faith. Thou renewest it every day, thou givest inwardly and outwardly what the soul needs, in the life of faith and in self-denial. We for our part dare only eat whatever bitterness thou dost offer in outward things and in the bottom of my heart I dare freely accept only this. For what comes to me throughout the day is my daily bread, if I do not demur at receiving it from thy hand and feeding on it.

Hunger is what spices food and makes it useful to us. Why do we not hunger and thirst for justice? Why are our souls not as hungry and thirsty as our bodies? A man who has an aversion to eating is ill. In the same way, our soul is seedy when it does not care for the nourishment that comes to it from God. The nourishment of the soul is truth and justice. To know what is good and take it into oneself, to grow strong in it, that is spiritual bread, the bread of heaven which we should eat. Then let us eat, let us hunger for it; let us be before God like the poor who beg at the door and expect a little piece of bread and are aware of their need and their misery. Let us do all we do, working, reading, singing, praying, with this hunger for the nourishment of our soul, do it all with an ardent thirst for the living water that springs in eternal life. Only a great and constant yearning for instruction makes us worthy to discover the wonder of God's law. Each receives this holy bread according to the measure of his longing, and thus becomes capable and able to receive the true Bread in the holy Supper in all holiness, not only physically, as many do, but with the spirit that sustains and preserves life.

FENELON

Everyone knows what daily bread means, and that one must eat so long as one is in the world, and that it tastes good, too. And my mind turns to my own children, how they enjoy eating and are so cheerful and happy at table. And then I pray that dear God will kindly give us something to eat.

MATTHIAS CLAUDIUS

If, for instance, there was a shortage of bread and necessary sustenance, if you had not got what you necessarily ought to have, if you had no proper prospect of being able to provide for your children, for all your diligence and thrift, or if you could not see how you yourself were to be cared for, what would at once come into your mind is: give us this day our daily bread.

You would turn your eyes to heaven, would look up to the invisible bread-Father who opens his hands so that all may be filled. You would say to yourself: He who provides food for young, squawking ravens and cares for small inconspicuous birds, will surely have bread for us, his dear children, for whom Jesus Christ died, if we work as hard as we can and await our happiness from his hands.

JOHANN MICHAEL SAILER

Here is the earth with its wonderful equipment and its custom of yielding in great variety at a thousand percent per annum, what was loaned it at sowing-time. Indeed it is very wonderful, although the people who have most to do with the earth and operate all these processes are commonly least aware of it.—Take a sod in your hand and look at it from above and below and sideways, you will not be able to see in the black soil any clue that flour or oil or potatoes or spinach or cress or carrots or beans or turnips or beets or anything of that sort are to be found there, no more than the sweet scent of roses or lilies of the valley, the lovely shape and color of forget-me-nots and corn-flowers. And yet every seed sucks in from the grey-black soil its shape and color and loveliness and smell and sweetness and nourishing properties; for the earth is a mysterious and wonderful factory, where day and night, unceasingly, spinning, weaving, distilling, cooking go on and on, a deep, inexhaustible well. God has sunk an inexhaustible store-room in the earth, accessible to all men living on earth, and to their children and children's children till the Last Day.

ALBAN STOLZ

OUR FATHER

Who can see the grain
and not remember
What holy food it is,
and not remember!

Who can see the wine
and not remember
What holy drink it is,
and not remember!

Who can be a Christian
and not remember
What Body and Blood he eats and drinks
and not remember!

GUIDO GEZELLE

It has always been the Church's wish that at every holy Mass
the faithful present should partake of the Lord's Table.

LEO XIII

It is the desire of Christ and his Church that all the faithful come
daily to the holy Banquet.

PIUS X

The fourth petition cannot mean an immediate provision of
bread. It can only mean that God wants to bless our work, so that
by means of it we can obtain what is covered by the word bread.
The fourth petition is therefore a petition for the fruits of our
work.

ALBERT EHRHARD

Sown in dark earth,
Grown to the light,
Ripened in sun and rain,
Mown with swishing cut,
Threshed and then ground,
Reshaped anew as bread
And then cut up again:
Such is our precious bread
That God gives to feed us
For our life of labor.

BERNEUCHEN LORD'S SUPPER LITURGY

To ask for bread is always to thank for bread too.

WALTER LÜTHY

We may understand the bread of the fourth petition as referring to bodily bread, and by extension to all things necessary for life, housing and clothing and all the external goods necessary for the job and the family.

We ought to ask for bread, simple nourishing bread, not for tidbits to tickle our taste, not for sweets and cakes. In the fourth petition of the "Our Father" the law of simple living is proclaimed particularly for such times as those in which we live today. It does not have to be iron rations and foods that have an aftertaste of bitter gall. But it ought not to be tidbits for gourmets either.

The fourth petition is a command of brotherly love. Alongside tax-contributions to the power of the state, there is a second, morally more important contribution to be made, and that is, freely-given Christian brotherly love, aroused and winged by a social consciousness on the alert. Our Savior taught us: "This, then, is to be your prayer, 'Give us *our* daily bread.' " It does not mean: Give me my bread. It means: Give *us* this day *our* daily bread. Even when someone is praying alone in his quiet room, he is praying in a great chorus together with his whole nation for *our* bread. Thus the Savior sat his disciples down together at a common table. Thus he meant them to share their bread with one another like brothers and sisters.

But when we pray the fourth petition, we must not let our mind run on bodily bread and economic goods exclusively. The fourth petition is in its deepest sense an appeal for nourishment for the soul, a prayer for that living Bread which has come down from heaven and imparts eternal life.

MICHAEL CARDINAL FAULHABER

The actuality of this prayer, so particularly obvious today, is only God's last attempt, truly the last, for love (a love intending "the last," too) to break through in that part of life where even the man most completely shut up in himself, at the very extremity of materialism, can no longer escape him. Thus, the urgent actuality of this petition, reflecting as it does the great problem of our day, is but a diaphanous veil for the fact that God is always actual. It serves but to prove the inevitability of God.

The true concern of true socialism is: a sufficiency for all, true

justice. And it is precisely this concern that is the burden of the fourth "Our Father" petition, where the whole Christian man is involved. Thus, true socialism is of its nature Christian, for Christianity is of its nature social: grounded in the all-intending love of God. His justice is love. True sufficiency for all can only come about through the fulfillment of this paradoxical law of love; multiplying what diminishes, it depends on the fact that order is established from above downwards, and that bread alone, i. e. what is indispensable, and nothing beyond, is eaten. These are things that socialism, in so far as it is not yet completely in step with reality, must learn from Christianity, in order to master that reality which is its intention and its field of action.

ANNIE KRAUS

The multiplication of bread as a symbol not only of God's love but also of love of neighbors: multiplication through dissipation, is the natural picture of all true love. In the long run, one garners far more than was there at the beginning, even when the bread that feeds was eaten long ago. Jesus here illumines in a miracle the law of the seed that dies and rises again.

HANS URS VON BALTHASAR

In order that I may have things to eat, others must have them too, I can only acquire them in company with the rest. We are placed within the economy of our nation, and have our place in Christendom too. For we are not only dependent on our position in the working world, nor do we receive our bread only through the successful labors of the great working community. For what is here being striven for with such immense expenditure of energy lies high above our human capacity, just as it lies utterly beyond the capacity of a bird to provide its own food, or of a lily to make its own dress. Life is given us; and because life is a gift, our livelihood is one too; and because it is a gift we pray for it.

ADOLF SCHLATTER

In the fourth petition, our attention is drawn to what underlies the Christian day and supports Christian trust: the mystery of Providence.

ROMANO GUARDINI

Christ the Lord desired that the wonderful, inestimably praiseworthy bond, between ourselves and our divine Head, should be

brought home to the faithful in a special manner in the Eucharistic sacrifice. For the priests celebrating it do not only represent our Savior, but also the whole of the mystical Body and all individual faithful. Likewise the faithful, too, offer the immaculate sacrifice themselves; through the priest's word alone it is present on the altar, through the hands of the same priest, in prayerful fellowship with him, they offer it to the eternal Father as an acceptable sacrifice of praise and atonement for the whole Church. And just as the divine Redeemer dying on the cross offered himself in sacrifice to the eternal Father, as head of the whole human race, so in this "pure sacrifice" he offers not only himself to the heavenly Father, as Head of the Church, but in himself his mystical members too, all of whom he has taken into his heart, however weak and sickly they may be.

But the sacrament of the holy Eucharist, which is a living and wonderful image of the unity of the Church—for indeed the bread destined for consecration is a unit made of many grains—is given us by the Author of supernatural grace himself, so that we may draw from him that spirit of love which urges us to live our own life no longer, but Christ's, and to love the Redeemer himself in all the members of his common Body.

PIUS XII

Why go to church? Because in the first place, quite apart from the immensities of grace and eternity, you will learn there how to receive reality, how to become real, how to live, for these are the living waters for lack of which the modern world is dying. . . . We learn to be wise; and then we learn to understand, long for, receive, not only the fullness of human life, but the life which is divine; and so we return to our roots, not only in the universe, but in God.

Through the bread and wine we become rooted again in nature; through the bread and wine we begin a divine life because we begin to be possessed by God. There is a third thing: the breaking of bread is the symbol of hospitality, of all that we mean by hearth and home; and so through the bread and wine we are restored to our roots in the human family. . . . The sacrament of unity is also the sacrament of peace. . . . The Eucharist gives us peace precisely because it gives us roots, in this world and the next, in the human family and the divine.

GERALD VANN

Give us this day our daily bread. In these terms we not only utter our prayer for sustenance, but also express our readiness to accept our daily bread from the Father himself alone. It is quite possible to let it be given by another power.

The sustenance of bodily life is the natural condition for all human spiritual life, all moral endeavor. That is the reason why we may pray for necessary nourishment.

Outward bread is not only nourishment of the body, but also nourishment of the soul and mind, or so it should be. And soul and mind will be nourished by daily bread when it is definitely accepted from the Father. Hence grace before and after meals.

When Christ taught his disciples the "Our Father," the sacrament of the altar, the holy Eucharist, had not yet been founded. But the mystery was forestalled. The very fact that Christ ate on earth and "broke bread" for others, throws a heavenly light on all earthly feeding, starting with the circle of the disciples, going on to Christendom, and fundamentally including all men who do not lock themselves in at his approach.

BERNARD MARTIN

This Feast has a double character: it is an eschatological Feast of Joy, and it is a memorial of Suffering, it puts us in mind of the heavenly wine of joy, it reminds us of the shedding of Blood. It looks back to the once-suffered death of the Redeemer, it points forward to the eternal life of all the redeemed. This two-fold connection is intrinsic to the Eucharist. The fact that only one aspect has remained truly alive for us indicates a lack. At no other point can the Christian be so utterly drawn out of himself and his world of suffering, into symbolically real contact with the coming world, as in the celebration and performance of the Eucharistic Feast. Nowhere else is contact with the coming life so close, nowhere else is its pre-formation so nearly grasped, and thus, nowhere else can its contemplation in faith be more inspiring, or the impression it gives, the surmise of promised blessedness, receive more convincing endorsement.

EUGEN WALTER

That in the command to love something new has occurred, something most intimately linked with Christ's act of Redemption, this he solemnly proclaimed himself on the eve of his Passion, immediately before the institution of the Eucharist; he proclaimed it

by his action in washing the disciples' feet, and by his words when he explained what he was doing. St. John the Evangelist introduces his account of this exemplary service of love in solemn terms: "Jesus already knew that the time had come for his passage from this world to the Father. He still loved those who were his own, whom he was leaving in the world, and he would give them uttermost proof of his love" (John 13:1). To Peter, who remonstrated, he said: "If I do not wash thee, it means thou hast no companionship with me" (John 13:8). The disciples were obviously much astonished at the Lord's action, so he began to explain it to them: "Do you understand what it is I have done to you? You hail me as the Master, and the Lord; and you are right, it is what I am. Why then, if I have washed your feet, I who am the Master and Lord, you in turn ought to wash one another's feet; I have been setting you an example, which will teach you in your turn to do what I have done for you" (John 13:12-15). However, the unique meaning of his action was revealed by Our Lord only after the betrayer had gone out, the man who did not desire companionship with him; then Jesus said to the Eleven: "I have a *new commandment* to give you, that you are to love one another; that your love for one another is to be like the love I have borne you. The mark by which all men will know you for my disciples will be the love you bear one another." (John 13:34-35).

The love which Christ here commands is to be the special mark of discipleship, and not only in the sense that the disciples should follow the example their Master gave them but in the still more actual sense that in their fellowship and through it, the disciples should practice the very same love that bound them to him. In Christ's command to love there really is a new commandment: he does not mean merely what people can do for one another in mutual help; he means love as he practiced it, the love that is the secret of his salvation. The "new commandment" is an exclusive function of the "new covenant" which Jesus founded on that holy evening in the sacrament of his Body and Blood. The command of love has a principle and irrevocable connection with our Lord's bequest to those who belong to him, in the Eucharist. At the Last Supper, Jesus acquainted his disciples with the manner in which they were later to commemorate and constantly make present the death he was to take upon himself on the following day, for love of men and for their salvation. And it was because he began to unveil before them the ultimate mystery of his love, and to prove this

love as an enduring one; and because he showed them his saving death on the morrow as one that was to remain present with them as the highest act and greatest sacrifice of his ransoming love, for all times; and because he gave them to understand that the New Covenant would function within the realm of divine love; on account of all this, he could now proclaim his new commandment to them, the commandment of love, named *Caritas*, charity; as utterly different from all worldly forms of love as the glory of the New Covenant differs from the glory of this world.

The manner in which Jesus solemnly promulgated the *Caritas* commandment, shortly before his saving death, and St. Paul's description of its nature, are thus in complete agreement. *Caritas* does not belong to the works of this world, however grand and generously conceived they may be; rather, it sprang from the heart of God when he first loved men and gave his Son to die for their salvation, thus making them brothers and sisters of Christ and children of his, the Father's, and with all this, put them in a position to realize this divine, saving love among one another, too. Were charity to forget that it issues from God, however much it abounded in good works it would lack love, and thus be nothing.

The solemn institution of *caritas*, in the upper room of the Last Supper, not only showed the true nature of charity, but also what form it must take. There is something wrong when Christian charity, which is so utterly different, both in origin and nature, from worldly welfare work, is in appearance exactly like it. The early Church had a sure instinct on this score, seeing clearly how the connection between Christ's saving deed and the work of charity must appear in the very way charity is performed. It was living knowledge openly witnessed to, that the carrying out of the commandment of love, as a unity of love for God and love for neighbors, as Christ declared it to be, would only become possible to the disciples after his sacrificial death, and through this death alone. For this death, in which Jesus, as mediator between God and man, turns humanity back to the Father and places it under his merciful judgment and his just mercy; this sacrificial death, through which the Father, for his Son's sake and in him, gives mankind new access to himself and a new associative dignity, this sacrificial death creates a new sphere for men to come together in, a new opportunity for unanimity and love. The Eucharist, as ever-present commemoration of our Lord's passion, should therefore, of necessity, constantly renew the bond of love between all who

celebrate it and are thus admitted as Christ's partners in mediation. It is not only a bond in the sense of people being of the same mind, but one that shines out in deeds, in the loving work of Christians for one another, as a token to the world of what Christians truly are. We know of the early Church that it was precisely this love for one another that outsiders noticed in the Christians: "See how they love one another!" It was not that outside the Church there was no convincing form of mutual assistance among people, either then or now; but when the pagans observed Christian charity, a breath of its mystery must have wafted over to them together with some presentiment that it was grounded in God and his Christ in a unique way, and was a sign of his Holy Spirit.

LUDWIG A. WINTERSWYL

Bread is a true, God-given concern of man's. To be concerned with bread and to pray for it are man's birthright. And this means two things. Philosophers have a word for the one: *primum vivere* . . . admitting livelihood as a necessary but comparatively despicable prior condition. Such is intellectual pride.

It is possible to make an idol of bread and a god of one's stomach. Indeed, one has to have been hungry for weeks on end, one has to have experienced what it is like when an unexpected piece of bread comes as a gift from heaven. One must have endured the effect hunger has on every aspect of life, to acquire once more a proper respect for bread and a proper concern for it. As long as men go hungry and daily bread is something improbable, it is in vain to preach to them of God's kingdom or the earthly kingdom. . . . But concern for bread must always remain a petition for bread. Otherwise man loses himself in the earthly sphere. He must know that our bread, however plentiful and assured, is bestowed day by day by the hand of God. . . . Therefore we do not pray for full barns and bursting granaries, but for daily bread. The exposure and vulnerability of human existence is echoed here. But what makes life worth while is trust in God and not a sense of security.

ALFRED DELP

In the fourth petition, Jesus wants to make his disciples and all who believe in him aware of this fact: it is not only through the life they receive purely out of grace, in God's kingdom, that they are placed in the Father's hands, but through their natural life too,

with all its needs. The Father's is all loving care for their life; the Father is the all-sustaining power that supports their life—in all its breadth and depth. Thus, Jesus places his disciples in the presence of the Father to bring him not only the great concerns of the first petitions of the "Our Father," but also the small concerns and cares of their natural life. The whole of life is the Father's gift, it flows from his hands. That Jesus' disciple should acknowledge that, and admit it in prayer to the Father, is the first thing Jesus wanted to make known in the bread petition.

Then comes a second thing. What is Jesus' disciple to pray for? Wealth and pleasure? A secure existence with all sorts of openings in life? No, he is to pray for a necessary sufficiency for his livelihood. Thus, Jesus deliberately leaves out the interests of the gain-seeking, pleasure-seeking self; they are not included in the bread petition. He knows that the great concerns of the first petitions are endangered by those interests and even driven out. He wants them to be safeguarded by the bread petition, and not to be put out of reach of ordinary people by his disciples' way of life.

THADDÄUS SOIRON

With the words of the fourth petition, Christ encourages us, in praying to our heavenly Father, to mention our earthly needs as well. The first part of the "Our Father" remains, of course, the most important part; the second must be utterly rooted in God's holy will and his kingdom. Better to perish in the gutter with God, than to "live" in opulence without him. We must, therefore, pray the fourth petition in all patience, believing and expecting that in his own good time, in his own way, and in accordance with his will, God will help; and not let ourselves become embittered against God, nor against the people who have more than their daily bread, who often enough remain appallingly deaf to the petition of others, implicit or expressed. Where millions of refugees flood the land . . . it is clear how much daily bread covers: a bit of ground to grow one's potatoes, a second shirt so as to be able to wash the first, a straw-sack of one's own, bed clothes for it, and if possible, as one's own private property, a winter overcoat and a pair of wearable shoes. . . . Also, a quiet place for the mother and her children is part of it, a cross and a picture on the walls; also, a purpose in life. . . . a hope of founding a new existence.

In our petition, we say "our" daily bread; that means we are responsible for the hunger of the man who has none. It means, too,

that we must pray with one another and for one another, and do both in good heart, so that we may present our prayers with great reverence before the judgments and ways of God, but also with very strong trust in our heavenly Father's omnipotence, truly believed in, and his loving-kindness, truly hoped for. The petition requires us to do penance and turn back to God with our whole heart, so as to be worthy of his assistance; and our prayer must be all the more pure and penitential and enduring, the more it is like praying for a miracle; and in the last resort it must be an endeavor to identify our will with God's will, and not the contrary.

H. L.

The Lord teaches us to pray God to give us bread for a day, and tomorrow to pray for it for another day. God does not need to lay in a great store for people to live on till he happens to pass by again; he remains close at hand and supplements the diminishing provision of every moment.

RUDOLF SCHWARZ

FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES AS WE FORGIVE THEM THAT TRESPASS AGAINST US

Tertullian calls the "Our Father" the whole Gospel in shortened form, and like the Gospel itself, it deals with all the questions that trouble mankind. Food for thought for the greatest minds, the main concern of philosophers and poets, the problem of man's destiny is nowhere so clearly presented as in the brief clauses of the Lord's Prayer. The question of God and his relation to man, the question of man's sanctification, is contained in the opening words. The problem of how to reconcile law and freedom is solved in "thy will be done." Social problems are dealt with in the second, fourth and fifth petitions and are present in all. The fifth petition raises the problem of guilt. Were all the answers to this basic question collected together, we should have a voluminous history of the human mind, one containing many errors of thought and belief.

Most peoples have admitted the fact of human guilt. To many it was a dark load of destiny which every living thing had ineluctably to carry with it; it was a penalty that had to be paid. And common to all times is the endeavor to get rid of guilt. But all attempts to be rid of it through "individual morality" only made it more irrevocable, and often enough, at the end of the "tragedies," those efforts at liberation broke the "heroes," or they ended in sullen despair or sullen acceptance of the inevitable. On the other hand, the Jews of the Old Testament, for instance, and those of later times, sought to escape from guilt by means of a close-meshed system of prescriptions and laws, ruling life down to the minutest details of it. But not even this could deliver man from the old sense of guilt; on the contrary, to the burden already to be borne it added transgressions of the laws, for their closely-woven net was still not able to circumvent human weakness. In a subtilized form, this at-

tempt lives on in Christian times, and even today people believe that evil, and with it, guilt, can be dealt with by humanistic standards in life and conduct. Yet often evil becomes predominant through the very application of those standards.

A deep-seated intuition of mankind has always connected the darkness and dread of guilt, and its perplexity, with religion. When the nature of guilt is not clearly recognized but is only dreaded, punishment, taken as a consequence of guilt, is connected with divinity. Efforts to expiate are indigenous to all religious cults. Holy ablutions, abstention from certain "polluting" foods, or sacrificial offerings were designed to conciliate God and absolve men. Altars were laden with fruits of the fields and other natural gifts, also slaughtered beasts and burnt offerings and even human sacrifices, all for the purpose of atoning for guilt. Certain rites are characterized by substitute expiations, with submission to some hardship, a punishment or a penance, for the purpose of deliverance from some recognized guilt.

Certain erroneous notions trace the fact of guilt to God himself; their propounders say, God tyrannically made men fall into guilt in order to encumber them with increasingly oppressive toils of sin and then to judge them. Goethe's verses, placed on the lips of the Harper in "Wilhelm Meister," are like a distant echo of these views: "Ye [the Gods] lead us into life / Ye let the poor become guilty / Then leave him to his agony / For all guilt is avenged on earth." Undoubtedly these words contain an accusation, maybe even self-accusation. But from anyone else such a train of thought would be taken for a complaint against God, making him guilty of men's guilt. From obstinate adhesion to this state of mind it is only a very small step to sheer godlessness.—We find the same point of view in Job's self-styled friends. The argument is that a God who behaves in such an ungod-like manner, tormenting men with their guilt, can be no God. And the next step is to be rid of him and deny his existence, the illusion being that God's impotence in the face

of evil has been proved, and that in consequence he is dead.

Other people and other trains of thought try to deal with the guilt question by denying it outright. They blunt and kill their consciences, and turn their attention to "pure nature," vastly increasing their guilt by divinizing nature. A deep-seated melancholy is often the result, but it is wonderful how sometimes a yearning for God's saving grace breaks through.—Others again may erect the idol of a blameless "superman," beyond good and evil, denying sin. These people reject redemption, they deny the operation of the Holy Spirit in the world and leave it a prey to the demons that rise from the abyss of man's heart when he lacks redemption. To the more prudent among them their own chaotic state is evident, presenting them with the counter-superman in the image of the "sub-man." Dostoevski was a seer with the gift of depicting the true conditions of this sub-man, far removed from God and Christ, and the disasters of two world wars have more than endorsed his findings.

Over against all these distorted conceptions and trains of thought, the fifth petition of the "Our Father" baldly states the fact of man's guilt, and all the commentaries agree that a guilt that is to be forgiven must surely first exist.

"Guilt" means something not allowed, it describes a state of affairs that arises when some good thing is accepted without any sense of obligation, it is the lack of response to a challenge. In this sense, all are guilty before God, even the smallest child. And the commentators never weary of stressing it. Who has ever found a sufficient return to God for all his loving-kindness? In the first place, we owe him ourselves. He gave us and still continually gives us all we need. He created us to let us share in his blessedness. He ransomed us with the blood of his only-begotten Son. All that he did for us, and all he does for us all the time, is done out of sheer love. And we remain eternally in debt to divine love.—But guilt means inherited guilt too, original sin and its consequences, to which all men are subject.

The oppressive sense of not being able to kick off the shackles and come free of the chained generations and all that impedes freedom of the will weighs heavily on us, as does the frequent twilight of our powers of discernment and our agonizing predisposition to evil, and we know we are guilty before God. Then the question arises: "Who is to set me free from a nature thus doomed to death?" (Rom. 7:23). Who will forgive me this guilt attached to my very existence, who will make me free?—Guilt consists, finally, in those personal sins "of thought, word and deed and the neglect of good." As a rule the state of innocence in guilt, which is the child's, gives way to that of the guilt-laden prodigal son, scraping a living among strangers, in poverty and distress, far from God, and constantly on the way home to the Father.

May God deliver us from all three kinds of guilt. The theory that God is the author of our guilt is alien to the "Our Father" and to the whole of the Holy Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments. Following the words of the prayer, Nicholas of Cues and others say guilt is ours, not God's.

Jesus, who taught the prayer, knows that man cannot release himself from the grip of guilt by his own strength, and the blood of a thousand burnt offerings cannot do it either. So he directs the prayer to the Father in heaven who alone can forgive.

Like the prodigal son of the Gospel story, no man can produce anything or bring anything with him for his reconciliation with his Father. Remorse is stamped on his face when he says: "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee; I am not worthy, now, to be called thy son." And God forgives him! His forgiveness is divine. It produces sanctifying grace, it confers adoption as God's child, it strengthens love to God and lets man participate in the divine life. The Father's forgiving love towards his lost son overwhelms the guilt-ridden heart. It is the hardest part to bear. To accept and receive is well enough, but to accept forgiveness is the touchstone of humility in the

guilty, as is the admission of a real need for ransom when man has become increasingly involved in guilt and can find no way out of the senseless state he is in. It is particularly hard for those who have constantly to turn back to the Father because of their recurrent homesickness for the dreary deserts they escaped from to throw themselves into the Father's arms.

The parable of the Prodigal Son discloses the New Testament's wholly new view of the forgiveness, dependent only on the reconciling love of the believer and the debtor's humble admission of guilt. And atonement offerings, which rites of the Jewish and other religions foreshadowed, came to a head in Christ's sacrifice on the cross. Jesus Christ as the High Priest of the New Covenant is also the atoning propitiator between God and man. "A death must follow, to atone for all our transgressions under the old covenant" (Hebr. 9:15). His blood, through which he presented himself to God as an immaculate sacrifice, cleanses and sanctifies the transgressors through the power of his eternal Spirit. All the Father's forgiveness is done through the merits of the Son. And for the sake of the Only-Begotten, the Father takes the lost son back home. The killing of the fatted calf is a symbol for absolution from sin through Christ. But the operation of forgiveness in man has such immense bearing that the theologians reckon it next in importance to the creation of man. The gain and enrichment due to forgiveness are so immeasurably great that the liturgy actually speaks of sin as "happy fault." The annulling of Adam's old debt confers at the same time the inestimable favor of God's love. And in the face of such love no one baptized in the name of Christ need ever lose courage or feel desperate, however great his trespass may be. It is this forgiveness that we pray for in the fifth petition of the "Our Father." Christ is himself in charge of it, —for "God has offered him to us as a means of reconciliation, in virtue of faith, ransoming us in his blood" (Rom. 3:25). Then, "let us enjoy peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1), and come forward confidently to ask for

forgiveness in the name of Jesus Christ; it will be granted us. When we ask for the remission of sins in the holy words of the Lord's Prayer, we know we have not prayed in vain. The commentators tell us that the sublime words contain a certain power of absolution in themselves, and properly prayed they imply and express loving remorse, so that the prayer wipes out both lesser sins and the sins of commission and omission in daily life.

Nothing man does is done entirely alone. As a social being he is always partly responsible for others too. And every sin and every transgression has its social aspect,—even though the fact may be largely forgotten, even by Christians. *Every* sin is due to insufficient love of God *and* our neighbor. We cannot too often call this to mind in endeavoring to get free of our self-centeredness and proceed towards real love—which is the very opposite of separation and sin. Just as guilt is common to all, forgiveness must be common to all too. St. Paul taught the Christian community in Corinth that the trespass of one member of the community required the absolution of the whole community. This fifth petition of the Lord's Prayer stresses the communal aspect of guilt and forgiveness, in the words "*our* trespasses." In recent years there has been a lot of talk about collective guilt, and as a rule neither the speakers nor those referred to were at all clear in their minds as to the religious bearing of the words. In the light of the Gospel, all men have their share of guilt, and an offense done by one is a blot on the whole of mankind. If one organ is ill, the whole body suffers. The second part of the petition brings its social character into broad daylight.

Indeed, our Lord added a clause that is as deep a cut into the rules governing human society as forgiveness, and justification: "as we forgive them that trespass against us" reveals the creative power of forgiveness. It not only removes guilt, wiping it off the slate, but includes something constructive too, a renewal, and an indwelling of the three-fold God in man. Where God forgives it is for no merit of ours, it is pure outpouring of his

abundant love; love makes its home in the heart of the one forgiven and impels those in whom Christ lives to act in love and to forgive too. The amount of scope we give this urge of God's love in us determines our part in fulfilling the fifth petition, which like all other petitions of the "Our Father" is fulfilled through a collaboration of God and man. Regenerated man, who has "put on Christ," no longer acts according to the tenets of "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth," nor according to the law of revenge, of "honor," for what rules him and commits him is the "greater commandment." It is indeed a greater commandment! As difficult for the apostles to understand as for the Jews, zealous for their law, or for the Romans with their pronounced legal sense. Peter wanted to forgive his guilty brother seven times, but the Lord said it had to be seventy times seven times, stressing the sheer exuberance of love's prodigality, a love that does not keep count. Various allusions are implicit here, and to explain them several commentators refer to the parable of the servant whose debts his master excused, but who dealt harshly with those in debt to him. St. Augustine refers to it, and Bossuet summons all transgressors of this kind, offenders against love, to "go to the place of damnation where there is no forgiveness more."

What a load it can be on the worshipper's mind is often shown in the commentaries of Christian antiquity as well as of the middle ages. Not all worshippers are carried along at the pitch of fervor that gave wings to St. Gregory of Nyssa's utterances, seeing the order of example and imitation between God and man reversed, as though God were to be challenged to imitate man's example in forgiving.—We know from early monastic times that the second part of the petition was sometimes omitted. It was one way of getting rid of the obligation to forgive, and though this was an abuse, it shows how highly the words of the prayer were still esteemed. The rule of St. Benedict, father of monks, was a wise move in the direction of solving the difficulty by prescribing that the Lord's Prayer be said

aloud at Lauds and Vespers by the Superior. Venantius Fortunatus' ardent words are in the same spirit.—In the middle ages the Germanic peoples held fiercely to their traditional notions of vengeance and honor. Many commentaries bear witness to the difficulty in those times of making people practice forgiveness of their neighbor's trespasses. Walther von der Vogelweide, for instance, managed to turn it round to something like: Forgive us our trespasses, even when we do not forgive those who trespass against us. Many held that we are only obliged to proffer forgiveness when we are expressly asked for it. Others warn us not to take our own guilt, our own offense towards God, too lightly by dint of measuring what other people owe us by a different standard.—Here and there the petition was seen as a sort of contract with God, to some extent a Christianized "I give in order to receive" (cf. Carinthian "Our Father" Hymn, Mark of Weida, and others). This conception, too, shows up the difficulty of the "change of heart" that Christ requires, which is not always rightly understood. But it is evident how necessary it is to return again and again to elucidating the meaning of the "Our Father."

Human forgiveness is inseparable from divine forgiveness. It is a mutual give-and-take peculiar to love. The sinner of the New Testament is the eternal model for us: "If great sins have been forgiven her, she has also greatly loved" (Luke 7:47).

Whoever has love in Christ shall keep Christ's commandments. Who can describe the binding power of Christ's love? Love covers a multitude of sins. . . . Love knows no separation, love does all things in harmony. In love all the elect have attained perfection, without love God is not pleased. In love our Lord accepted us; for the sake of the love he bore to us our Lord Jesus Christ gave his blood for us according to God's will, his body for our body, his soul for our soul.—May our sins be forgiven us on account of love.

CLEMENT OF ROME

When we ask the Lord to forgive us, we must forgive too, for we are placed under the eye of God, the Lord, and must all appear

before the judgment seat of Christ and each one give an account of himself.

POLYCARP OF SMYRNA

The prayer for forgiveness is itself a confession of guilt; for whoever asks for forgiveness admits his fault.

TERTULLIAN

For every man sins, "there is no man on earth so exact over his duties that he does ever the right, never commits a fault." No one is free from uncleanness, even when his life lasts but a day.

ORIGEN

The servant who would not remit the debt of his fellow-servant, although his master had let him off the whole of his own debt, was thrown into prison. Because he would not forgive his fellow-servant he lost what he had been granted by his master. In his commandments Christ brings this before us even more urgently with the words: "Your heavenly Father will forgive you your transgressions, if you forgive your fellow men theirs; if you do not forgive them, your heavenly Father will not forgive you your transgressions either." There will be no excuse left for you on the day of judgment, for you will be judged according to your own judgment. What you did to others you must have done to you. God wants us to live in peace, harmony and concord in his house. He wants us to remain after our rebirth as he made us in our second birth. . . . Therefore God does not accept the offering of a vindictive man. He requires him to go away from the altar and be reconciled with his brother first.

CYPRIAN OF CARTHAGE

Continuing his directives, the Word of God attained to the highest peak of divine blessedness in this petition; for here it is a question of how a man should prepare himself if he wants to draw near to God: for this, a man should, now, hardly at all be confined to the limits of his own nature, but should make himself like God through the practice of virtue, so that he can appear to be someone else who only does what is due to God. For to forgive sins belongs to God alone and is reserved for him.—When someone imitates the special marks of God himself, in a certain sense he becomes God, because he thus furnishes the proof that he is faith-

fully growing like him. . . . Whoever draws near to the Good must be good, to the Just, just. . . . The order is reversed here: usually the good appears in us through imitation of God, but in this case we venture to hope that God will follow our example.

GREGORY OF NYSSA

You are a man, and you like the people whom you are to forgive to beg your pardon, and yet you think God should forgive you without your praying for it.

AMBROSE

If anyone relapses after receiving the grace of baptism, he does not leave him to despair of his salvation, but has him taught by the Doctor of Souls to pray for remission of his debt. Therefore he gave us the doctrine of human kindness. For he wishes us to treat people gently who have become involved in wrong-doing; he wants us to forget the injustice done to ourself, so that we may claim forgiveness, having granted forgiveness.

JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

What will you do? You have enemies; watch yourself carefully—love them! A furious enemy can do you nothing like the amount of harm you do yourself when you fail to love your enemy. . . . This ought not to appear impossible to you: I know, I acknowledge, I have proof of it, that there are Christian people who love their enemies. If it should seem to you an impossible thing, don't do it. But start by believing one can do it, and pray that God's will be done in you. . . . You keep saying: Who can do it? Who has ever done it? May God effect it in your hearts! And I know that some do it—the ones who do are grand people. Indeed, are not all the faithful in the Church so, who go up to the altar and receive Christ's body and blood. Are not all so? And yet all say: Forgive us our sins as we forgive them who trespass against us. If God were to answer them: How can you require of me that I keep my promise, when you do not do what I have commanded? What did I promise? To forgive your trespasses. What did I command? That you should forgive those who trespass against you. How can you do that if you do not love your enemies?—Brethren, what should we do? Does Christ's flock shrink to such tiny dimensions? If only those may say: Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them who trespass against us, those who love their enemies

—then I do not know what I should do. Then I do not know what I should say. Should I say to you: If you do not love your enemies, stop praying? That I dare not do! Rather, pray that you may love!

With our sins absolved in baptism, we should still find ourselves in narrow straits if daily purification were not granted us through the holy prayer. Alms and prayers purify from sin. One forgiveness is assured once for all in baptism, another forgiveness is daily assured for as long as we live, in the Lord's Prayer.

The first man was created in innocence of nature, in faultless nature. He was properly created, he did not produce himself. What he did to himself is but too well known: falling from the potter's hands, he broke. For he who created him guided him too, and he sought to leave him. God let it occur, as though he were to say: Let him leave me and let him find himself, and his misery shall show him that he can do nothing without me.—Man could not look after himself when he was good, as he was, how was he to make good, having turned bad? When he was good, he did not take care of his goodness, and now he is bad, is he able to say: I shall better myself? What will you do, you bad man, when you went to the bad as a good man, if he who remained good does not create you anew?

How can I repay the Lord for all he has done for me? When a man looks around to see what he can repay, he finds something immediately. What does he find?—I will take the chalice of salvation.—You were thinking of repaying, and already your thoughts are back to receiving. I beg you, think it over! If you want to receive again, you will be in debt again, and how are you then to repay? If you remain a debtor all the time, when will you repay? You will find nothing to repay him, you will only have what he gave you.

If your brother offended you seven times a day and comes and says, I am sorry, then forgive him. You will not find it tiresome to keep on forgiving someone who apologizes. Were you not in debt yourself, you could by right, and indignantly, demand repayment; but now you as debtor have a debtor yourself, and you are the debtor who cannot pay his debt; take care how you treat your debtor, for so will God treat his. Listen and be fearful: "It rejoices my heart to fear thy name." If you are glad to be forgiven, fear, so that you will forgive yourself. The Redeemer showed us how much there is to fear, placing before us that servant in the Gospel whose master called him to account and found him in debt to the

extent of a hundred thousand talents: he ordered him to be sold, he and all his house, to settle the debt. He threw himself at his master's feet and begged for time, and he obtained remission. And he went away from his master with remission of the whole debt, and met his debtor, his fellow-servant, who owed him a hundred pieces of silver. He began to throttle him to force payment from him. He has forgiven, he was glad, but not in such a way that he feared the name of the Lord his God. The servant said to his fellow-servant, just as the Lord had said to him, Be patient, and I will pay it all. But he replied, No, today you shall pay me.—It came to the ear of the master and as you know, he did not only threaten not to forgive him again when he had further debts, but he laid his full debt on him afresh and ordered him to make payment of all that was due.—How much he should fear, Brethren, possessing faith, trusting the Gospel, and not taking the Lord for one who does not keep his word.

Let us fear, obey, take care, forgive. For what do you lose when you forgive? You bestow forgiveness, not money!

AUGUSTINE

Some people have a very mild and indulgent attitude to offenses towards God, even when they are serious faults. But when they themselves are the offended party they demand their rights relentlessly and mercilessly. Whoever does not forgive the offending brother from his heart will gain not forgiveness through this petition but damnation. Indeed by his harsh judgment of his brother he positively demands sterner judgment for himself by saying: "Forgive me as I have forgiven."

JOHN CASSIAN

Hear what Peter learned from the Lord: he wanted to forgive his brother seven times, but the Lord said: "seventy times seven." Peter, as man, set up limits. The Lord knows no limits for divine goodness and love towards man. We constantly sin in our words and deeds. God sees it all, but looks away in order to bring us to repentance. . . . The doors of his mercy are open to us. He does not close them to those who do penance.

ELISIAS OF ARMENIA

As often as we celebrate the holy liturgy, dear brothers, and prepare to receive holy Communion, you should think why we

come, and before coming, you should recall that we have just spoken to God in prayer, saying: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us." Make the effort to forgive in praying thus. Or how could you say these words at all? Or do you want to pass them by, perhaps? I ask you: Do you want to pray them, or do you not? You hate your brother and say: Forgive us as we forgive. You will answer, I do not say these words. You pray and do not say them? Look out, be careful! Now you are praying: forgive whole-heartedly. Do you want to quarrel with your enemy? Quarrel first with your own heart! Say to it: Do not hate! But if you still hate, command your heart: Do not hate! How then can I pray? How can I say: Forgive us our trespasses? We can say it indeed; but what comes next; with what sort of a face do we dare to frame these words: As we forgive? What faith is there here?—If you still do not want to forgive, your soul will be saddened, for you have promised it not to hate. Then say to it: Why are you sad? Do not hate, then you will not lose me. Why do you perplex me? Hope in God. You are distressed, you suffer, you are harassed with sickness, that is no state to hate in. Hope in God; he is the physician. For you he hung on the cross and yet was no avenger. What vengeance are you still wanting? You have hated even though you will be saved. Look at him who hangs on the cross, who prepares medicine of his blood for you who are sick. You do indeed want to be saved? Look at Christ on the cross, hear him implore: Forgive them, for they know not what they are doing.

CAESARIUS OF ARLES

Lauds and vespers may not be ended until the Superior has concluded by praying the Lord's Prayer for all to hear, because of the thorns of vexation that so easily spring up. Warned by the solemn pledge: "Forgive us, as we forgive," the brothers are thus to cleanse themselves of any such faults.

BENEDICT OF NURSIA

Just as we do not want to be debtors, so we should not to have any debtors: for through them and in them we are bound and released.

PASCHASIUS RADBERTUS

Forgive us our debts through thy inexpressible mercy and

through the power of suffering of thy beloved son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and through the merits and intercession of the blessed Virgin Mary and all thy elect, as we too forgive our debtors. If we do not perfectly forgive, O Lord, grant that we may perfectly forgive, so that we may for thy sake truly love our enemies and pray to thee for them, and thus do not repay evil with evil, so that we may serve thee in all things.

FRANCIS OF ASSISI

From this petition we learn that in this life man needs two things: One of them is always to act in fear and humility. For some people were so bold as to claim that man could live in this world and avoid sin by his own powers. But this is granted only to Christ, whose mind is immeasurable; and to the Holy Virgin, who was full of grace and without sin. . . . But for the other saints it was not made possible that they should not fall into venial sin. . . . And this is confirmed in the prayer, for it is proper for all men, saints too, to pray the "Our Father," with its Forgive us our trespasses. Thus, all acknowledge and confess themselves sinners or trespassers. But if you are a sinner you must fear, and humble yourself.

But the prayer lets hope grow in us, too. . . . For Christ says: "I remitted all that debt of thine, at thy entreaty." Then on any day you make petition, you can obtain the mercy of God when you pray with remorse. Thus, fear and hope grow out of this petition, for all contrite and confessing sinners obtain mercy; but this petition is necessary on their accounts.

THOMAS AQUINAS

From the fifth petition we perceive that all are by nature loaded with sin. Now, according to Christ's teaching each should pray thus, each admit that he has trespassed. This guilt is our own, for it is a part of our nature. Thus it pertains to all in common, and God is neither the cause nor the origin of our guilt; for it is indeed our own.

It is our guilt, and responsibility for it falls on us, not on God. If our guilt is to be forgiven us, by what means is it to be done? Through Jesus Christ alone, and the holy Christian Church will forgive us all guilt, however large, however heavy, however long, however persisting it may be. And had one man, were it possible, committed all men's sins, still the massed guilt could be estimated

as quite small in comparison with God's mercy, and the treasure of grace of the holy Christian Church. Man need have no doubt of this.

This petition resumes the whole doctrine of the fruits of suffering and Christ's reparation for the Church, and in particular that one can only pray for this forgiveness in union with the Church, as the word "us" shows; and many other points.

NICHOLAS OF CUES

So long as we do not forgive, God will not forgive us our sins, for in these words we make a contract with God which he wants us to observe at once. God withdraws his disfavor and his anger in that very hour when he is prayed to by us, and when we feel remorse and distress for our sins. Therefore we should do likewise for our neighbor, when we are asked by him to do so. And if a man were as stubborn as many unfortunately are, nonetheless you owe it to God to rid your heart of all anger, rancor, envy and hatred towards him. . . . You ought not to wish him anything worse than for yourself, specially in case of need and in what concerns the soul's salvation. And in extreme need you should provide him with no less help than your best friend.

MARK OF WEIDA

Further we cannot go, nor pray, only as far as we would concede, had we power over others. As far as our forgiveness goes, so far does God forgive us when we request it. Therefore if we would like to have much forgiven, we must have a quite simple heart in us that knows nothing of vengeance nor leaves anything unforgiven. For God is judge and knows the hearts of men; he knows whether we forgive or not: he knows, were such a debt to come *our* way, and were *we* the creditors, how presumptuous we should be! For our lips and our heart anticipate judgment or forgiveness, according to whether we forgive or not. But forgiveness is his, he knows how much has to be forgiven in our forgiving, and no one else.

THEOPHRASTUS PARACELTUS

Just as no one can remit debts except the creditor alone, so only God can forgive our debt of sin; for before him alone we have become debtors through our sins.

ROMAN CATECHISM

In this petition we desire that God will graciously absolve and forgive us for having sinned against him in thought, word and deed. And that he will not avenge our trespasses and sins according to the severity of his judgment, either now or at our last end, but pardon us according to his mercy. May he graciously behold the bitter passion and death of his most beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and take it into consideration.

JOHN FABRI

You cry, Thief! thief! and scold him, over-bold,
Yet you robbed God of more than he the world.

Ah, Sinner, do not mourn to see the Magdalen
Leaving our Lord in peace and comforted by him.

You are not yet her like. Would you be comforted,
Lay yourself down, as she did, at his feet.

ANGELUS SILESIVS

Most kind Father! Forgive us our very great trespasses, the many serious sins, the negligences, from which neither we ourselves nor any creature whatever can ransom us. Therefore we implore thy infinite mercy for forgiveness, that thou wouldest pardon our offenses.

WILLIAM NAKATENUS

It is wonderful how God makes the forgiveness we expect dependent on the one he commands, namely, that we be reconciled with those who offended us. Not content with insisting on this duty, he places it on our lips in our daily prayer, so that he can point to us as he did to the wicked servant, if we fail to forgive: You are an unworthy servant, convicted out of your own mouth. You, too, begged me for forgiveness on condition you forgave. You gave your word and yet you have held back from forgiving your brother. Begone with you to the place of damnation, where there is no more forgiveness and no more mercy.

BOSSUET

O Lord, how could I offend thee, in spite of all thy attributes as Creator, as Father, as Master and Protector, as I have always known thee and will always acknowledge thee? How could I rise up against thee? How could I be separated from thee and

deny thee? Indeed, God of mercy, it is only too true that I throw myself at thy feet, deeply ashamed. Only accept my humble confession which I make now and will renew continually to the last moment of my life, in the midst of the utter and terrible uncertainty of my state, even when thou hast forgiven me. I know that I am a sinner, not only because I am able to sin but because I have actually sinned and daily sin. I know that the number of my sins is beyond counting; if your prophet felt he had committed more sins than there were hairs on his head, with how much more right can I say of myself what he admitted for his part, declaring his guilt? I know that every sin is a debt owed, and that sinners must give thee an exact reckoning of their debts, which thou judgest according to the laws of thy justice, requiring reparation in kind.

Hence, I, who hitherto piled up sin upon sin, have in the course of my years only piled up debt upon debt. What a judgment! What obligations! What reason there is for condemnation, what cause for damnation! Terrible judgment! I seem to hear thy thunder rumbling about me. What must I do to ward it off?

LOUIS DE BOURDALOUE

Be gracious to our enemies. Forgive them and let our heart be reconciled to them according to the love with which thou hast loved us, for we were indeed thy enemies and thou didst never cease to have mercy on us and to receive us in grace.

JOHANN GEORG HAMANN

There is some sense in sin and pardon,
 There is some sense in life in heaven.
 I see it now; my own life wrecked,
 A poor life sinking down to naught,
 Each step with unknown danger fraught:
 How it all matters, in retrospect. . . .

ANNETTE VON DROSTE-HÜLSHOFF

Our debts to God are our sins, our debtors are those who caused us sorrow or did us an injustice. We now pray, may God forgive us our sins exactly as we forgive those who have offended us. There is no man who has been so often offended by others, as God by each and every man.—Each and every man, before praying the "Our Father" should think over carefully whether he, too, has forgiven everyone from his very heart, and put it all out

of mind. Whoever has thoughts of revenge in him, hating and desiring in enmity that God would punish his enemies, should not pray the "Our Father," or in his accursed stubbornness he prays God's curse down upon himself, he prays God to punish him.

ALBAN STOLZ

This then, O my soul! is what the sinfulness of sin consists in. It is lifting my hand against my infinite Benefactor, against my almighty Creator, Preserver and Judge—against him in whom all majesty and glory and beauty and reverence and sanctity center; against the one and only God.

O my God! I am utterly confounded to think of the state in which I lie! What will become of me if thou art severe? What is my life, O my dear and merciful Lord, but a series of offenses, little or great, against thee! O what great sins I have committed against thee before now—and how continually I am sinning in lesser matters. My God, what will become of me? What will be my position hereafter if I am left to myself! What can I do but come humbly to him whom I have so heavily affronted and insulted and beg him to forgive the debt which lies against me? O my Lord Jesus, whose love for me has been so great as to bring thee down from heaven to save me, teach me dear Lord, my sin—teach me its heinousness—teach me truly to repent of it—and pardon it in thy great mercy!

I beg thee, O my dear Savior, to recover me! Thy grace alone can do it. I cannot save myself. I cannot recover my lost ground. I cannot turn to thee, I cannot please thee, or save my soul without thee. I shall go from bad to worse, I shall fall from thee entirely, I shall quite harden myself against my neglect of duty, if I rely on my own strength. I shall make myself my center instead of making thee. I shall worship some idol of my own framing instead of thee, the only true God and my Maker, unless thou hinder it by thy grace. O my dear Lord, hear me! I have lived long enough in this undecided, wavering, unsatisfactory state. I wish to be thy good servant. I wish to sin no more. Be gracious to me, and enable me to be what I know I ought to be.

JOHN HENRY CARDINAL NEWMAN

The simple, plain "Our Father" petition is of course not sufficient to free us from mortal sin and eternal punishment. . . . But the

"Our Father" can perfectly well procure the effacing of the daily trespasses of God's children living in a state of grace, and should be used for this purpose. But it is only effective when the saying of the petition is accomplished by adequate remorse for venial sins, that is to say, when the petition is outlet and expression of a supernatural intention of penance.

NICHOLAS GIHR

The fifth petition of the "Our Father" represents a culminating point not only in relation to the preaching of the gospel, but in the whole religious history of humanity. For it contains a two-fold teaching which neither pre-Christian paganism nor Judaism knew of. The petition for the forgiveness of sins, as such, reveals to us that a confession of sinfulness and the desire for God's mercy are the foundations of the truly religious life. And the second clause of the petition, with its challenge to one's own capacity for mercy and forgiveness, in intention and deed, towards fellow men, as a condition for the remission of sins, signifies the most intimate connection imaginable between religious and moral life, giving the latter the highest sanction it can have.

ALBERT EHRHARD

To be conscious of sinfulness is part of being a Christian. Only by admitting our guilt do we attain to the truth and reality of our salvation. . . .

Our guilt consists first of all in the total guilt of mankind, coming from the first fall in Adam, of which every man has his share by the fact of being man. It is in our very nature. This alone deprives a man once for all of the right to claim to be sinless, even were he an Elias, a Baptist, a Peter, Paul or John. On the other hand there are the great mass of sins which we commit ourselves in our own lifetime. Our conscience witnesses to it and a glance at the network of sins spread all around us confirms it—body and soul recurrently caught in it, so that it is hard, indeed quite impossible not to fall into sin.

This prayer—when it is properly prayed—contains remorse, in fact remorse of love. But what a pity when it is said with no knowledge of this; it means that a large part of its efficacy will fail to function. But is remorse enough? There is such a wonderful and simple test of this that we ourselves can learn from it! It is far more reliable than the most lovely long prayers and warm

feelings: "As we forgive them that trespass against us." If we forgive, we shall be forgiven. It is so sure that there can be no doubt of it. Whoever is uncertain of the earnestness and depth of his remorse, can leave his difficult examination of conscience aside, and can look around him to see if he has a grudge against anyone, and if he is resentful of an injustice someone has done him; and then let him be rid of his bad state of mind, on account of his own guilt before God—and it is then forgiven him.

EUGEN WALTER

As a general rule, the Gospel means by the terms "guilt" and "trespasses" less a deliberate breaking of God's commandments than, far more likely, a real debt, something I have omitted or neglected.

Jesus Christ will talk to us one day, in the last judgment, about these unperformed duties, and will have to say to us: "You did not feed me or give me drink, did not visit me, when in the shape of the hungry human brother, in prison, alone, I crossed your path. You owe me food, clothing and drink, you owe me the attention you failed to give me."

Christ does not teach us to pray: "Avenge this transgression, Father! Thou dost see this injustice, and thou hast thunder and lightning at thy disposal, to strike down the villains! Thou dost know the guilty ones, thou knowest the tormentors and torturers of this squirming world of ours. And the lashes that whistle down upon us are indeed thy divine scourges. Why dost thou not break up these worthless, guilty tools of thine and throw them away. . . .?"

That is not the way Jesus teaches. How challenging, in fact, is his manner of *not* being the advocate of those demands made in heat and from natural instinct! Instead, he teaches us: "Forgive us our trespasses." And most certainly he does not mean it to be simply a privately edifying prayer.

HELMUTH THIELICKE

This petition of the Lord's Prayer admonishes us to admit our guilt for the sins we have patently committed; to acknowledge how great an injustice lies in what we sometimes take for a mere trifle; to look at the sins that underlie our just acts and our virtues. . . . And from all this to acknowledge that we have not only committed sins, but are sinners, and as such, with all that

we are, stand guilty before God. It admonishes us not to raise ourselves up out of the crowd into an elite of conscience, but to place ourselves honestly in a state of common responsibility. It admonishes us to pray not only on account of our personal guilt but also on account of the universal guilt, to pray that God will open our eyes to it, deliver us from its spell, and help us ever to come to him anew out of this common guilt.—For to be a Christian means, precisely, always to be coming out of guilt, the one, great guilt, together with all the private guilts it includes, to God, to beg him for forgiveness, and in this new forgiveness to be gradually transformed.

ROMANO GUARDINI

Community obliges; it consists in receiving, but he who has received must also give. That is inviolable justice. I destroy the community when I only want to receive and not to give. But when what we receive is incomparably greater than what we give, we are debtors.

ADOLF SCHLATTER

For a man to pray like this is to know himself called by God to be his child again, and to beg to become such a child of God again. It is to turn away from what his own thoughts and acts make of him, and also from what he makes of himself, and to beg that God will turn him into what he had intended him to be, and thus deliver him from his sins, which coil about him and obstruct him from becoming what he is before God.

ERNST LOHMEYER

To forgive is the most characteristic and exalted privilege of divine dignity and power. The most divine act of the heavenly Father was indeed an act of forgiveness, and God always readily forgives again. We men know this only since Adam's sin found so noble, so exalted a Redeemer. On that account the liturgy of the Church dares to call the first sin a "happy fault," a most necessary fault.

HUGO LANG

Our guilt is, above all, guilt towards God; he lives among us and we do not follow him; we live in his presence and offend

him; we daily betray him as he was once betrayed: that is our great guilt.

REINHOLD SCHNEIDER

Divine forgiveness is a melting-pot, it is the creative power of love at work in the world. And human existence is such that this power is only operative on our behalf if we develop its counterpart in ourselves.

The Man without guilt took our guilt upon him, and now we can forgive those guilty toward us. The Man without guilt took our guilt upon him, and now we can participate in divine forgiveness.

BERNARD MARTIN

Finite man never says all he should say in one prayer. Thus the prayer about trespassing is never the only prayer, nor is the fifth petition the whole of the "Our Father." The prayer about trespassing, the hymn of God's love, thanksgiving and praise for grace accorded, the blessed word of unshakable hope, the sober petition for bread, the self-forgetting prayer for others, the laud and honor of his great glory—all come together in the Christian's prayer. For the rendering of this chorus there is no formula. We shall pray it as the Spirit inspires us to pray it.

KARL RAHNER

AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION

We saw how the second and third petitions of the "Our Father" belong together, and in the second part of the prayer, so do the fifth and sixth. The little word "and," linking them in one sentence, expresses this.

The fifth petition dealt with the forgiveness of trespasses and assured remission of sins; but the possibility of incurring further debts still exists. Of two possible forms of world, one resplendent in immaculate holiness, the other open to sin, it is the second that took shape. Sin occurred. But in spite of it, man's freedom is irrevocable, however much impaired by the fall of our first parents. But in the sixth petition we pray that sin may henceforth no longer occur.

The phrase "and lead us not into temptation" seems to give the impression that it is our heavenly Father himself who exposes man to sin, which he then succumbs to. As in the fifth petition, we have here a wrong idea: the idea that God positively makes man fall into guilt. But faith in a loving, preserving Father runs directly counter to his notion. He is a Father who does not at all want the sinner to fall and to perish, for he created him for blessedness, not so that those cleansed and redeemed by the blood of his Son should be driven into the abyss of sin and annihilation.

Among New Testament texts on temptation, there is one from St. James that rings like a contradiction to the sixth petition of the "Our Father": "Nobody, when he finds himself tempted, should say, I am being tempted by God. God may threaten us with evil, but he does not himself tempt anyone. No, when a man is tempted, it is always because he is being drawn away by the lure of his own passions" (James 1:13-14). The apostle is definitely against making God the author of sin. "That is utterly remote from God, even when he tempts

a man" (M. Meinertz). But evil arises in the heart of man and brings him to the point of having to decide for or against God. He has the possibility of falling all the time, and he can always cling to God and be held up by him. But he is called upon to return to a state of obedience. He must give proof that he knows he is a created being by carrying out God's commandments, serving him and uniting with his holy will, which is made known to him through the natural moral law, the voice of conscience, and the word of revelation. Not only his spiritual, supernatural life, but his earthly life, too, is in continual dependence on God. The fact that our choice has constantly to be made anew, in freedom, is something like a temptation that God proposed to us. Is it possible that the fifth petition of the "Our Father" means, we should like God to restrict our freedom and compel us to turn to him, so that the opportunity for sin would be removed and the temptation nonexistent? No, that is wrong, too. For God would thus be denying man his nature, which he created for freedom. The free choice for God, that is, "the temptation from on high," is thus a part of man's nature. Temptation is a testing of the human will in regard to obedience towards God and his holiness. The commentaries come back to this point again and again, pointing out that it is impossible not to be tempted; our way on earth is full of temptations; to be tempted is part of man's nature; and God sometimes tempts man through trials.—The temptation from above is, as a number of commentators put it, a sort of proof-by-trial to which man is subjected by God, just as the angels and the first parents endured trial-by-obedience. Here we have that eternal testing of assent to the status of creature, accepting not-to-want-to-be-like-God. It is a temptation which man has to endure and to resist over and over again. In full awareness of the power and splendor that are truly his alongside his lowliness and misery, he is inclined to look at the miracle of the created world and say: I and the world are self-sufficient; together we are so great, so power-

ful, we are so complete, that we need no God, for we should only have to serve him. This form of temptation is answered by Angelus Silesius: "The world is most lovely, but it is nothing." It was to meet this temptation that asceticism erected its defenses in detachment from the world or rejection of it.

The "temptation from above" came to Abraham, Joseph and Job. The apostles, too, were put on trial, particularly Peter and Paul. The saints were tested by God before he raised them to his holiness. And even then they were still tempted! For the heart of the most human of the saints—St. Augustine, St. Teresa, St. John of the Cross, for instance—was an abyss of temptations, and abyss of meanness, misery, profligacy even. Pascal, most candid of men, but with a profound knowledge of the human heart, calls man a "monster," meaning all the folly he is capable of, which all had its beginning once as temptations.

Even Jesus' holy Manhood had to undergo temptation. Here the activity of two powers was evident, for together with testing by God there is "temptation from below," Satan's. And Satan concentrates on getting hold of what is holy. "The demonic power attacks figures of consequence" said Goethe, in a profane paraphrase of what Satan's temptation consists in. —In the gospel we read that Jesus "was led by the Spirit away into the wilderness, to be tempted there by the devil" (Matt. 4:1). It is not clear, from the Gospel account, whether the spirit that led him was good or evil. Most authorities say it was the spirit of God. This would confirm that God sanctioned this temptation by the devil.

Where freedom exists, there exists also the possibility of sin. And in this freedom the devil sees his chance; he lays his snares and casts his nets to turn the occasion to his own advantage. If he wins, man is chained to sin; meanwhile his freedom God-wards still exists, even after his choice is made, a precious but precarious possession, to be continually fought for, in daily, hourly, unrelenting temptation. The evil one

tries by all possible means to thwart the freedom God gave and through sin to conjure up the void and induce denial of God. Seen in this way, temptation is a painful experience of Satan's power, God willing; it is the constant danger of yielding and going under. Now the possibility of choice in man, exercised by man, affects everything that man has to do with. Thus, *everything* can be a temptation, wealth or poverty, health or sickness, company or solitude, occupation, youth or age, knowledge and education as much as ignorance itself. This is another aspect that the commentaries constantly refer to.

When that great man, Nicholas of Cues, describes sin as the nonpresence of God, he goes on to say that the devil takes care to gloss over God's absence at the moment of temptation. He does it by spreading an illusive atmosphere and creating confusion of mind by preferring appearance to the truth of being. Even in Christ's temptation the devil took pains to insert doubt and uncertainty into his questions: "*If thou art the Son of God.*"—His whole sham is shown up in this questionable "*if.*" The first parents had the same experience in the Garden of Eden: "What is this command God has given you, not to eat the fruit of any tree in the garden?"—Every Christian knows from experience how the temptations of his own life begin with a doubt; doubting the faith, doubting the rightness of the commandment which temptation is bidding him transgress, finally doubting even the divine origin of the prohibition. Teachers of the spiritual life constantly draw attention to the ambiguity underlying temptation, which has its origin in the deliberately deceptive designs of the evil one. And herein lies the great danger of temptation, that it does not present evil as a power of gloomy splendor but lets it appear as a higher value. Lucifer, the highest of the angels of light, still, after his plunge into the depths, has something of his original brightness, a shimmer of light mingling with the darkness of the pit.

When the prayer asks for temptation to be removed, the

"temptation from below" is what is meant because it is not possible for the "temptation from above" to be removed from us, as we saw: it is an appeal for God's assistance in the battle with evil. It begs God to come to our rescue with his grace, so that we do not fall into sin but may stand fast under the devil's attacks and parry them successfully. The sixth petition is thus a prayer for conquering grace as Augustine taught. Certain commentators interpret this petition verbally, with "Lead us not into temptation, that is, do not let us perish in it." That is how St. Augustine took it, adding: To "be tempted" and to "be led into temptation" have two different meanings. The latter implies succumbing to temptation, while the former describes the "temptation from above." Cassian's interpretation is similar.

The practical effect of the "Our Father" petition is first and foremost God's concern. It is up to us to pray that he will deign to bring it about. But as each petition assumes a certain attitude in us, according to which we are to govern our conduct, the sixth petition is like all the others in that it requires of us active participation in bringing the petition into effect. What this participation consists in is clear from the elucidations of St. Thomas, Fénelon, Bossuet, Abbot Marmion, and many other men widely versed in the exactions of the spiritual life. Over against temptation they place the goods and treasures of the grace of God and the Church for strengthening resistance to evil: love of God, a recognition of where danger lies through the gift of understanding, cultivation of the presence of God, Christ-like patience, prayer, avoidance of occasions of sin. Just as the early Christians frequently fled from persecution and thus escaped temptation—Tertullian called persecution a temptation—so should we, by avoiding the occasion of sin, flee from that first self-encumbered fleeting contact with temptation (Clement of Alexandria, John Chrysostom). Recognizing the situation, and seeing through the devil, are connected by St. Augustine with understanding, for which

we also pray in the words of the sixth petition. Of all the prayers for the avoidance of temptation, ejaculations are again and again specially recommended. They were already customary in the early Church and were called "Jesus prayers" by the ascetical monks of the Eastern Church. To be a monk was, after all, to rank as a confessor, a fighter against the temptations of the flesh and the spirit. As one of the most effective prayers of this kind, a monk recommends "Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me." Then there was a great liking for saying verses from the Psalms to ward off temptations. In these invocations for the protection and assistance of God in temptation our Lord's direction for praying the "Our Father" is carried out to the letter: "This, then, is to be your prayer." Christ meant not so much a verbal repetition of the "Our Father" as freely praying in the spirit of the seven petitions.

The fall into sin of our first parents did not only affect those immediately concerned, and the same is true of temptation. All Christians, in fact all men, compose a great community of the tempted. And experience teaches that a common resistance to the enemy is far more effective than individual resistance. In the sixth petition of the prayer there is not one man praying, or it would be, "Lead me not into temptation." But the whole Church militant cries out in one accord: "Lead *us* not into temptation."—Albert Erhard mentions how contagious temptation is, and points out that many sins only come about through the cooperation of two or more people, and that there are tempters and tempted, seducers and seduced. This shows up the enormous moral responsibility that the "Our Father" places upon us. How could we pray this prayer with sincere hearts if we were being occasions of sin to our fellow men? St. Albert the Great is not alone in teaching in his "Our Father" commentary that we must pray for those whom we know to be in the fire of temptation, that one has an obligation to help them, that one ought not to vent one's wrath on them but surround them with kindness and friendship. Thus, in the

sixth petition, too, we come upon the basic Christian commandment of love for neighbors, the one Christ said was like the first and greatest, which is love of God.

Just as Christ was Man in order to be tempted, he was also Word in order to be glorified. The Word was quiet and silent in order that he should be tempted, scorned, crucified and should die, but dwelt in the Man in victory and endurance and goodness and resurrection and ascension on high.

IRENÆUS OF LYONS

Sail past the song (of the sirens) for it brings death. If you but will, you are victor over the powers of destruction, and bound to the wood of the cross you will be ransomed from all corruption. Your pilot will be the Logos of God, and the Holy Spirit will see that you reach the haven of heaven. Then you shall behold my God and be initiated in that holy mystery and will have a taste of what is hidden in heaven, kept in store for us; neither an ear has heard it nor has it entered into the heart of any man.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

That a prayer so easily grasped may be complete, let us add that we should not merely pray for remission of sins but also for their total removal: Lead us not into temptation, that is, Let us not be led into it, by the one tempting, of course. Let there be no illusion that the Lord tempts! That would be as though he did not know the faith of each one or rejoiced in bringing him to fall; weakness and wickedness are devil's matters. For even Abraham was commanded to make sacrifice, not to tempt his faith but to preserve him, so that he could serve as an example for the Lord's commandments which were going to be given later, namely, that one should not love one's child more than God. He himself, because he was tempted by the devil, showed himself a master in temptation and a teacher.

TERTULLIAN

The whole of man's life is a temptation. Therefore we would pray for deliverance from temptation, not in the sense that we

should not be tempted, for that is not possible, particularly for those "on earth," but in the sense that we should not succumb to temptation.

The usefulness of temptation is roughly as follows: it is what our soul has admitted into itself, so secretly that only God knows of it, hidden to all others and to ourselves, that is made patent in temptation, so that our real nature no longer lies hidden, but we come to know ourselves, and with good will own up to our own moral deficiencies, and thank God for what became visible through temptation.

ORIGEN

From this petition it is evident that the fiend can do nothing to us without God's permission. . . . But for a two-fold purpose he is given power over us: either for punishment, when we sin, or for glory, when we keep clear. . . . But when we beg not to fall into temptation, we are reminded of our own impotence and weakness; for we pray thus in order that nobody should be insolent and overbearing; nobody make proud and arrogant claims; nobody presume to the glory of martyrdom and suffering. The Lord himself taught humility in the words: "Watch and pray, that you may not enter into temptation" (Matt. 26:41).

CYPRIAN OF CARTHAGE

If you are tempted, think of the crown that is awaiting you! God tempts in one way, the devil in another; God tempts in order to crown.

AMBROSE

In this petition Christ is quite obviously telling of our misery, reducing our pride to naught by the counsel to avoid battle and not go seeking it. But thus there will be more honorable victory for us, more humiliating defeat for the devil. When we are needed in battle, we will stand fast manfully.

JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

Our path on earth is full of temptations:

The enemy does not give way and does not die till the dead are risen.

It is one thing to be tempted, another to be led into temptation.

When we say, "Lead us not into temptation," we exhort ourselves to pray that, deprived of divine assistance, we shall not let ourselves consent to any temptation whatever, or yield through loss of courage.

If it is on account of their understanding that the pure in heart are blessed—for they will see God—then we want to pray "lead us not into temptation" in order not to have a divided heart, through not simply desiring what is good (God) and relating all we do to it but going after temporal and earthly goods. For the temptations which issue from these things, though apparently so heavy and hard to bear, cannot get the better of us if we are not overcome by the temptations attached to the allurements of things people find good and pleasant.

AUGUSTINE

This petition does not mean, may God never tempt us, but, may he grant that the one tempted be not overcome. For Job was tempted, but he did not fall into temptation, for he committed no folly, did not blaspheme in a godless manner, did not do the will of the tempter. Abraham was tempted, Joseph was tempted, but none fell into temptation.

JOHN CASSIAN

Temptation, Brethren, is a deception. It conceals happiness in unhappiness, unhappiness in happiness, and thus brings the ignorant man to his downfall. So we pray that we may not fall under the oppression of sin into the toils of temptations. When we read, "God leads man into temptation," it only means that he leaves people who go chasing after their sins to fend for themselves.

PETER CHRYSOLOGUS

Our Lord, himself the way of light and path of peace,
 Leads us not into the seducer's toils, but for our sins
 Leaves us and lets us fall; one loving the world's allurements,
 Luxury, pleasures, dazzling extravagance, will find
 God gone from him, and plunges in whenever temptation
 leads him.
 Let us turn back from such ways, let us take heart

And struggle along the rougher way and narrower path;
It leads to a heavenly realm, though the entrance be narrow.

CAELIUS SEDULIUS

Our Lord, when he suffereth that we be tempted, playeth with us as a mother with her young darling; she flieth from him and and hideth herself, and letteth him sit alone and look anxiously about, and cry, "Dame! Dame!" and weep awhile, and then with outspread arms leapeth forth laughing, and embraceth and kisseth, and wipeth his eyes.

FROM THE ANCREN RIWLE

For not what thou art, nor what thou hast been, seeth God with his merciful eyes, but what thou wouldst be.

FROM CLOUD OF UNKNOWING

Of what avail is it, Lord, to be baptized and washed clean of death when I touch death again? It is not enough, Lord, that thou forgavest past sins, if thou dost not keep me from the sins that impend. For I am quickly ready to sin, and if thou dost not keep me, I fall back into sin. So when thou dost let us be tempted, O Lord, for our testing, humiliation, and training, do not let us fall into temptation.

BONAVENTURA

In this petition we must consider how we are all tempted in the same way, and must thus look after one another in love. This loving care is expressed in four different ways: in sympathy with the tempted, in helping him to bear his weaknesses under temptation, in prayer for those tempted, just as though we ourselves were being tempted, in holding fast to God, that he shall not forsake those tempted, not at the height of their temptation.

ALBERT THE GREAT

Tempting is nothing other than testing or making an attempt. That is why man is tempted: to test his virtue. Man's virtue is tested in two ways, for it is effective in two ways. First through good behavior, then through avoidance of evil. "Leave what is evil and do what is good." . . . Therefore man is tested to see if he

is ready to do what is good, to fast, and so on. And his virtue is great if he is found ready to do what is good. In this way God sometimes tempts man, not as though his virtue were hidden from him, but to make it apparent to all, so that he may be an example to all. So did God tempt Abraham. On that account God sends just men troubles, so that they may bear them patiently, so that their virtue may be made known and they may advance in it.

Secondly, the virtue of man is tested through temptation to do evil. If he resists well and does not give in to evil, his virtue is great. But when he succumbs to temptation, he possesses no virtue. This temptation to do what is evil is not from God. "God does not himself tempt anyone" (James 1:13). Rather man is tempted by his own natural body, by the devil and by the world. The body is always wanting its pleasures, natural ones, which are often sins. The body tempts, too, by drawing a man away from what is good. . . . The devil is a strong tempter, for when nature has been subdued, another arises, the devil himself, against whom we have to wage intense warfare. "It is not against flesh and blood that we enter the lists; we have to do with principedoms and powers, with those who have mastery of the world in these dark days, with malign influences in an order higher than ours" (Eph. 6:12).—The devil sets about his temptations most cunningly. Like a good army-leader besieging a fortress, he seeks out the weakest place to attack, and tempts a man at that point where he finds him weakest. . . . When the devil tempts, he does not immediately place evil in full view, but something that has the appearance of good, so that to begin with he can at least entice him away from his good intentions; afterwards he can more easily lead him into sin if he has first turned him aside a little bit. Satan himself can pass for an angel of light. (II Cor. 11:14). And the world, too, tempts in two ways: first, through too great and inordinate desire for temporal goods; secondly through persecutors and frightful tyrants.

God guides man through his love so that he shall not fall into temptation; for every love can withstand every sin; "Many waters are not able to extinguish love." And we can resist through the light of understanding. God illumines us with it; for the philosopher (Aristotle) says that every sin is ignorance. And David, too, prayed: "Give light to these eyes, before they close in death" (Ps. 12:4).

Let love dwell in your hearts, if it is only the size of a little

spark, it will put up a resistance to every sin.

THOMAS AQUINAS

We do not pray not to be tempted. For "Job was tempted," "Abraham and Joseph were tempted," to the increase of their merits and for their victor's wreath. But we pray not to be led into it, not to be overcome; Just as though someone should pray, not to be touched by fire, but, not to be burned.—Further what is meant is that the foe can only tempt us when God lets it happen, so that all our fear should turn to God as, likewise, all our worship.

MASTER ECKHART

O trustworthy, dear Lord! Do not let our enemies try us as they choose and please. But if thou dost decree that they should try us, lend us thy grace and help us to overcome them and not be overthrown by them, as thou didst grant thy grace to thy beloved servant Job.

O thou inexpressible Good! As without thee we can do nothing, we beg thee: When rash and great temptations of body, world and devil oppress us, stretch out the right hand of thy help, so that we fall not into dishonoring thy fearful Majesty!

O thou most exalted Knower of human weakness! Tempt us not with good fortune or its contrary, nor sickness, nor poverty of such kind that thou knowest, in thy divine Wisdom, we should fall and not be bettered in our life.

HEINRICH VON HESSEN

AND NICHOLAS VON DINKELSBÜHL

Temptations are so many and so strong that every man, whether good or bad, is in need of God's help not to be abandoned in temptation. For we are continually tried and tempted by our own bodies, by the world, and by the devil. These three enemies we can hardly resist, we need God's help, for he will not abandon us, but we must put our own industry to it too. If we only urgently beg for help and yet do not wish to be rid of sin, we shall be left by God to fend for ourselves. Unfortunately, one finds many people who, with evil will, anticipate temptation, instead of waiting till they are tempted, and bring themselves into temptation and for this reason do not want to give up places and company

and all else that provides occasions for sin. Such go freely into temptation. Would it not be foolish for a man to give himself up voluntarily into the hands of his enemy, when he could easily flee from him? He has no right to say God has abandoned him. Rather, God left him to his own devices; for God will have no one in heaven against his will.

NICHOLAS OF CUES

We do not pray that God will send us no temptation, for to endure temptation is useful to us and very meritorious, and is common to all whom God loves. We pray solely that he will not lead us into temptation by consent, that is to say, not inflict us with our overcoming by temptation, but give us power and strength to resist it; and that we do not consent to it and perish in it.

JOHN DIETENBERGER

In the sixth petition, we pray not that we may be entirely free from temptations, for that would be against God's will; but we pray for his help, that we may not be overcome, that he will strengthen us through his grace, that we may tame the lusts of the flesh and crucify our body with Christ; that we may despise the honors of this world, its cunning, its false promises and its infidelity; that we may bear all misfortune with equanimity, and that we do not turn aside from truth and justice because of our bodies.

With this prayer we arm ourselves with weapons to fight many mighty foes. We are Christ's soldiers and must make war against the flesh, the world and Satan.

The greatest temptation is, not to be tempted.

JOHN WILD

We too, my daughters, must very often make this petition to the Lord and implore him to preserve us from those secret foes, to protect us from their hidden temptations, to let us discover their artifices and their poison and not to allow them to deprive our eyes of light and truth. O how good it was that the divine Master taught this petition and in our name addressed it to his divine Father! See, my daughters, how these wicked spirits hurt us from all different sides. Do not believe that the damage simply consists in this, that they make us believe the pleasures and delights they excite in us come from God. In my opinion, it is but one of the

smallest hurts they do to souls. Indeed, this snare is often just what souls need for their salvation. In the belief that those delights come from God, they feel themselves prompted to give more time to prayer, and profoundly aware of how unworthy they are of such things, they thank dear God unceasingly, consider themselves bound to greater loyalty in his service, and thus make themselves fit really to receive the graces they thought they already possessed.

TERESA OF AVILA

The virtues of humility, patience and love are perfected in the furnace of temptation and trouble.

JOHN OF THE CROSS

To tempt means to put someone to the test, in order to discover whether the things we give credence to are based on truth. This way of tempting is quite out of the question for God, for what can there be that God does not know yet?

God lets good devout people be tempted, but he does not leave them without the assistance of his grace. True, it happens all too often that we are left to fend for ourselves because of our sins, according to God's just and mysterious judgment; and then comes our downfall.

When they undergo temptations from the foe the faithful should remember whom they have as their leader; Christ the Lord, who has gained the victory in this battle. He has conquered Satan. He is the stronger, he fell upon the heavily armed enemy and wrenched from him arms and booty as well. Of his victory over the world St. John writes: "Take courage, I have overcome the world!" And in the Apocalypse he is called the "victorious lion," a conqueror going out conquering. The Epistle to the Hebrews is full of victories of holy men who with "the faith that subdued kingdoms,—shut the mouths of lions," and so on. And from the acts we read of there, we can draw our own conclusions about the victories which men distinguished by Faith, Hope and Love win daily in inward and outward battle with demons. These victories are so numerous and splendid that we should judge them to abound and be more renowned than anything—could we but see them with our eyes.

ROMAN CATECHISM

As this present life is like warfare on earth, so that we are constantly attacked by diverse temptations from world, flesh and devil, let us call for divine help, prayerfully and with great earnestness, not only in order not to be overcome by our contrariness and succumb and be damned, but that we may strongly resist the devil, scorn the world, tame our bodies, and finally be crowned as unassailable servants of God. Without Christ we can do nothing. Indeed we are not in a position to think anything on our own account, for our capacity is from God. "Pray," said Christ, "that you fall not into temptation." And Peter wrote: "The devil goes about roaring like a lion to find his prey."

GEORGE SCHERER

The greatest and most significant duel that ever took place is shown us in the Gospel in Christ's temptation. Both sides have the support of immense power, both display great courage and a high degree of audacity, they seize upon the most dangerous weapons of all, their enmity is irreconcilable, only the victory of one or the other can bring the fight to an end, there is no question here of reconciliation or compromise. The parties concerned are God and Satan; the weapons used for the combat are God's words; the enmity is founded on a revolt. The Church confronts us with this fight, for we have to follow our Commander who goes into battle today. And what is our life on earth if not a perpetual fight? . . . We must muster our forces, all that we have been commanded, and set to; the example of our Savior is before our eyes, the enemy is not invincible. If we take the trouble to struggle on after our Master, then without doubt victory will be ours.

FRANCES OF SALES

Knowledge of God's presence is the most perfect help against temptations. It supports, succours, calms. We must not be put off by temptations, not even by the most scandalous. Scripture says: "What does he know who is not tempted?" and again, "Because thou hast won his favor, needs must that trials should come and test thy worth" (Tob. 12:13). All is temptation on earth; cross and suffering tempt us in that they hurt our pride, and happiness and well-being, in that they flatter it. Our life is continual conflict, but a conflict in which Jesus Christ fights with us.

We have to let temptation rage and not cease to ward it off. Like

a traveller caught in a storm in open country who wraps his cloak round him and plods on in spite of the bad weather.

FRANÇOIS DE FÉNELON

One does not only pray not to succumb to temptation, but also to forestall it, according to the word: "Watch and pray that you enter not into temptation." Not only out of fear of succumbing, but out of fear of entering into temptation. One has to deduce from the words the necessity of praying at all times, under pressure of necessity, and beforehand too. Do not wait till temptation is present, for then the confusion and excitement of your mind will hinder your prayer. Pray before temptation and forestall evil. "God tempts no man" says St. James. So when we pray, "Lead us not into temptation," we must understand it in this way: Do not let us enter into it. And St. Paul says, likewise, "Not that God will play you false; he will not allow you to be tempted beyond your power." Our power is chiefly in our prayer.

BOSSUET

People want to be "of the world," meaning a particular world, that is, one that pleases one more, one that means more to one, a world that more definitely appeals to us emotionally, flattering our inclinations, a world in which the innocence of the greatest saints has suffered sorry shipwreck and where even the virtue of angels is scarcely secure. People want to live in the midst of this world and take part in its diversions, its social events, its amusements, without regard to all the dangers we incur, and without drawing any profit from awareness of its all-too-great decrepitude. And there are many other obligations connected with it into which people hurl themselves blindly, though with full consent and freedom of will: obligations to do with one's profession and status, duties arising out of one's position and assignments, one's business and interests. Then, if we have not got the grace to say to God, Lord, take away from us the temptations in which we are losing ourselves, we shall not escape from them. And has God not the right to answer us: Why—you cling to them out of sheer force of habit; why have you not seized any of the means I put at your disposal to defend yourself? Do not count on me, nor on yourself.

BOURDALOUE

An old tag says, the devil is a rogue, and though he goes about like a roaring lion he is much more likely to trail around in fleeting thoughts like airy vapors; and at first these thoughts merely flit across the mind, then they gradually settle down there, take root, and establish themselves firmly. Then they rise into our look and our gestures, and finally break out of our mouths in words, and while we believe we speak by most divine right, it is the devil in grim playfulness fluttering from our lips, setting upon our neighbor with claws and horns, till a devil issues from his mouth too and a battle arises between the two of them at the expense of the souls in which the devil had taken up his abode, only to fly out of their mouths again.

JEREMIAS GOTTHELF

The temptations against faith are a real crucifixion; you really do believe, though more unconsciously than not; yet your love remains in existence and seems to take precedence of faith. But the devil does all in his power to throw you into doubt, for he sees that one day you will be very closely united with what he hates. Therefore he puts confusion in your soul and creates darkness; but along this road all inward-looking souls must go to attain to perfect union.

A precious means for coping with temptation is patience.

D. COLUMBA MARMION

We want to be Christians! In this city too! In the avalanche-rush of its paganism! In the glacier-cold of its scepticism! In its crazy plight too! We want to be strong. O Lord, do not throw too heavy loads on our shoulders! Measure them to our weakness! . . . Nowhere else is the battle so abysmally hard as in our city! Do not make thy commands too stringent!

CARL SONNENSCHNEIN

Lead us not into temptation!—to pray thus is directly to commit oneself, never, never to incite one's fellow men to sin or to lead them into it. Many sins occur through the collaboration of two or several people. Then there are always seducers and seduced.

ALBERT EHRHARD

Lead us not into temptation! What can this petition mean, for

God can surely not tempt a creature to do evil? But no petition can be so dark that it is as good as meaningless to us; we must and may have ideas about it. For my part, I understand it to mean that in his governance of things private and public, God should not remain hidden too completely or too long, so that the faithful may catch a glimpse of his line of action, though hidden to the "world." If God were to withdraw completely, who could preserve the faith? According to his promise he will not do so, but the way to parry this temptation, one into which, unlike all others, God himself might lead us, is included in the great terms of the prayer: "Lead us not into temptation." Show thyself! Do not let thy mills grind too slowly! Do not let anyone doubt that thou art the Lord, do not let any despair.

THEODOR HAECKER

Trials fall upon us from without and within. Power, brute force, pain, humiliation, one's own shortcomings, God's silence, all can impose bitter decisions on us. Then there is the possibility that anxiety will appear, that creeping worm that feeds on man's inmost substance. Demonic forces may break out in savageness, rebelliousness, doubt, a will-to-live that won't let go. All this can mean very bitter hours, and afterwards the world is different from what it formerly was. One is flayed alive. The scars and wounds remain.

The only hope of surviving those hours is our Lord God, and the fact that we did not embark on them voluntarily. The Lord bids us pray that those hours may be spared us.

ALFRED DELP

The Bible, Old and New Testament, can be called the book of temptations. In its first pages we have the temptation of the first couple, in its last, the prophetic description of the great trial "which is soon to fall upon the whole world, for the testing of all who dwell on the earth." And between this beginning and this end there stretches the history of God's people and the story of individual men of God, and this homogeneous history is a continuous chain of temptations, which begins with Adam and does not end with Jesus and his disciples. Indeed, God's history means, simply, the perpetual recurrence of temptation, since the world was created and till it is completed.

ERNST LOHMEYER

"Lead us not into temptation" means, may God provide that this possibility (to sin), which is irrevocable, be not acted upon.

As far as temptation is concerned, there is never a special time for it. It is interwoven in all that relates to life. Today's temptation grows out of what happened yesterday and throughout all the past years. All I did and all I failed to do all the time is still present. It has entered into my living being as weakness or strength, as protection or peril. . . .

The petition appeals to that in God which outstrips his justice: his mercy.—So it is the petition for God's patience.

ROMANO GUARDINI

God is the author of man's vulnerability to temptation. He made man thus, and set him within given bounds in God's kingdom, too, as subject to temptation. He did not make man's life so inoffensive and safe that it can be conducted without temptation and fighting. Man's whole existence, including all his vulnerability to temptation, lies in God's power. Of course, the possibility of overcoming it and the strength to do so lie in God's power, too.

God is not *the* tempter, that is to say, not the one who wills sin, this tempter is the devil. . . . He wills men's sins in order to abolish God's work in mankind.

The Father can put men's loyalty to the proof; he can equip them with strength to be a match for the power of the enemy; he can pour an abundance of grace into their souls to ensure their resistance to temptation; he can order the circumstances of their lives in such a way as not to become a severe trial of their loyalty. Knowing how God holds men's fate in his hands, Jesus' disciples must constantly pray to God: "And lead us not into temptation."

THADDÄUS SOIRON

Jesus' charge: "Pray, that you do not enter into temptation," and the petition for preservation from sin in the future, "lead us not into temptation," are the same. Jesus' faith in guidance from his Father, to whom he remained true in his own most heavy hours of suffering and conflict of soul, is reflected in the prayer of the disciples; full of child-like trust, they confidently expect the Father, who produces all the circumstances of life, even those that include temptation to sin, to be able to preserve them too, and

to do so if they ask him to. They should not yield to vain self-confidence, but in due awareness that our nature is weak, show a willing spirit by watching and praying in the utter assurance that their Father in heaven will save them, and without troubling themselves to know how he will do it.

JOSEPH MARIA NIELEN

In view of his temptability, a Christian should learn from the "Our Father" that he is always dependent on God's mighty mercy, on his Fatherly love, that he must always turn to the great, patient heart of the Father.

ALFONS HEITZ

Our Lord's temptation is a model of all temptation: no man will win the day as he did, in his quiet divine power; men only win when they throw themselves on their knees and beg for the assistance of the angels who waited upon the Lord after he had endured temptation. But in the last resort Satan's scope cannot exceed his demands and enticements on that occasion: so that basically he was conquered then once and for all. If Christ's kingdom is a perpetual victory over evil, then this victory of the Lord will be perpetually reenacted; the Lord wins, as he did then, but only in those who belong to him, his strength using them as means.

REINHOLD SCHNEIDER

The petition "Lead us not into temptation" lets us see life as something actually dangerous, something where one can come to grief and perish, where one can back the wrong horse and place one's all on the wrong cards. . . . The fact is, through the lesser and greater occurrences of our life, little likings and great passions, we can reach the point of losing touch with the Father. . . .

Everything can be a temptation to me, there are certain instincts and urges I have a quick ear for, with an apt trick for toning down God's word of command and still greater cunning in discovering it to be inapplicable in my case,—but the big things of life can be temptations to me, too.

HELMUTH THIELICKE

So long as man lives he is ineluctably at the crossroads.

The first enemy comes from within, it is his own heart. All temptation has its turning point in a man's heart. There is no ex-

cusing this. It is what St. James meant when he said that no one should attempt to put the blame on God when he is tempted. Temptation begins in a man's heart because, even when sin is forgiven us, we do not, unfortunately, cease to be sinners.

The second enemy, or the second group of enemies, does not issue from within the heart, but from outside, from our surroundings. . . . Temptation from without can come along very subtly, unnoticed, out of the blue, so to say. A special temptation of this kind is the so-called atmosphere in which one lives. . . .

The third enemy comes from below, from the abyss. That is the devil in person.

EUGEN WALTER

When a man is tempted he has not yet made his choice, he is still in process of making it, still in a state of conflict, his soul is being sounded to see how deep it is, his character is being weighed up for its value in gold, a whole row of the highest virtues are now turned to account, for the first time entering the fray. In temptation it will be discovered whether a man has convictions, whether he possesses a scale of values, whether he lives out of true, great love. . . .

So when we pray: "Lead us not into temptation," we do it trusting that God will not lead us into temptations beyond our strength, and in each temptation will help us with his strength to resist it successfully.

HUGO LANG

If God did not want there to be temptations, he would never have let the tempter approach the couple in Paradise. To wish for a state without temptation means, to wish for a happiness about which one need do nothing oneself. A wish that can never be fulfilled, for it is in contradiction to God's plan for the world.

BERNARD MARTIN

It is not cowardice when we pray in the sixth petition: Lead us not into temptation, but sober recognition of the dangers that surround us, and our own weakness. Behind us are the sins that have occurred, with their conscience prods, and ahead of us, around us, indeed, within us, are thousands of incitements to new sins. Scarcely has the "forgive" of the fifth petition left our lips . . . scarcely is the old sin got rid of, we have to raise our hands in the new peti-

tion: "Govern thou what I am still to endure," so that temptation may be kept away from us and we may behave as thy children. "Lead us not into temptation."

And it is no presumption on our part, it is not as though we were trying to put the blame for our stumbling on God, or supposed he intended to cause us to fall. We know that trials are necessary to preserve faith and steel strength, and God leads us into such temptations for our own sake, but he never tempts us beyond our capacity but would help us to win and to remain victorious.

MARTIN SCHLUNK

When temptations arise, temptations of lust, weakness, hatred, vengeance, unbelief, blind self-will, bitterness, and so on, arising from our very substance and out of our very nature, may there also arise in us that ultimate and most basic part of us, which is not involved in the temptation unless "we" let it be (but if this basic thing does not quickly succeed in taking command and reimposing the law on the *whole* man, we shall have involved it permanently). May it arise! It is man's inmost self. May it start crying out wildly and persistently, as one in mortal despair, crying to God, furious and harsh with the flesh and the tempted mind. May this inward man flee to God, not remain alone but flee in weakness to God's strength, flee from the danger of unfaithfulness and betrayal to eternal true God; begging for love, shouting for the Holy Spirit, crying out for the power over death of Christ's cross, for man finds courage in the grace of the cross alone. And courage is needed to face the choice, and beyond the refusal to yield to life's hungry claims—a refusal like death—to choose the life of justice and truth, God's life. A man under temptation must not parley with the temptation but talk to God; and not discuss the temptation with God, but talk with God about God, about his grace, his love and his life. When the serpent starts talking to men, he ought to find no one ready to listen and reply. Its first word, "Why," should be taken as a challenge not to discuss the reason of the law with the serpent, but to talk it over with God who is the only and eternal reason; and to worship this ultimate Reason of reasons, and turn all desiring God-wards. Only by praying can a man withstand temptation, for through prayer alone he regains that holy unawareness proper to God's child, not understanding that sin is canvassing him, and scorning it. Actually, the first temptation always finds us weaker than we ought to be, for otherwise our inner appetites and

inclinations would not respond so readily. The overcoming of sin thus depends on the overcoming of those appetites and inclinations. But this happens only when a man's desires and inclinations turn God-wards again. Which is prayer.

Therefore, pray in temptation! Learn to pray! Do not say to yourself, I can't; say to God, Thou canst. Don't say to yourself, without "that" (whatever it is you have to give up) I cannot live any more; say to God (say it aloud and again and again, say it patiently and persistently), Only without Thee I cannot live! Don't say to your renunciation, you are the death of my real self, but say to Him: Thou art the beginning of true life, which only begins to live through dying. Beg for a clarity that is not deceived when temptation comes disguised as a child of light, and when that all-too-human part of you that is a lie knows a hundred reasons why in your case the common sober law of God should not apply, holding forth in the most subtle and even devout language to point out why your situation is unique and not to be measured by ordinary standards. Pray that you may be immune from sin's ingratiating, which St. Paul condemned when he said, "Does it follow that we ought to go on sinning, to give still more occasion for grace? God forbid." (Rom. 6: 1.) God's grace can raise the *poor* sinner from his fallen state. Woe to whoever falls and does not believe this, not letting God be any bigger than his own guilt. But woe indeed to the man who is still standing and would like to fall in order to give God the opportunity to pick him up again. How does he know that God will pick him up? There are sins against the Holy Spirit which find no forgiveness, either in this world or the next. For a man to seek his ransom through sinning, means he is not far from such sin as this. And today temptation to such sin is close to many people. Pray for light in temptation.

KARL RAHNER

When a man prays: And lead us not into temptation, he may humbly beg God to release him from it, but he remains inwardly ready to put up with the temptation for as long as it pleases God. With this, as with any other cross he has to bear, man says to God, with Christ, If it is possible, let it pass me by, but be it done, not as I will, but as Thou wilt have it. What he specially prays for is grace, grace not to succumb under the burden of temptation and trial, but to let these serve God's purposes; that is, praying that it may all be to the greater glory of God, and for his own good and

the good of many others who need help in coming clear of temptation. The communion of saints, the unity of the Mystical Body, is revealed here too: God gives strong men temptations to endure which the weaker cannot withstand. Of the Cure d'Ars it is said that he took on the temptations of his penitents, the ones they had always succumbed to, and they were henceforth free of them.

LEO VEUTHEY

BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL

With the seventh petition of the "Our Father" and the *Amen*, we have come full circle round. They are lacking in St. Luke's text, and actually, as far as content is concerned, they offer no new viewpoint, as we shall see, and consequently less has been written about them. Many commentators take them together with the sixth petition. The very form of the prayer allows this, linking the two petitions with the little word "but." A conjunction denotes either contrast in the two phrases it links, or basic interdependence. Here there is no contrast,—“lead us not into temptation” has the same purpose in view as “deliver us from evil”—and there is a fundamental dependence of the seventh petition on the sixth. This is how St. Augustine, for instance, reads it: “When God delivers us from evil he does not lead us into temptation; when he does not lead us into temptation, he delivers us from evil.” But the seventh petition is closely linked to the other petitions, too. It repeats them all in a negative form. For it is an evil, when God's name is not hallowed, when his will is not done, when we do not consciously receive our daily bread from his hand. In the seventh petition we beg once more, comprehensively, to be freed from all that evil.

These are all references pointing to the real nature of evil: evil is sin; in a wider sense it is the author of sin, the wicked one, the devil; or the consequences of sin, particularly of original sin, which embraces all the pains of man till his death, and indeed till the eternal death of damnation.

The seventh petition, as the prayer for deliverance from evil, incorporates in a very few words the intention behind the whole process of salvation. Where there is no sin and no devil, there we have God's kingdom come; where trespasses are forgiven and temptation is triumphantly overcome, God's will is being done, God's favor is supreme, God's love is at work

on man's salvation and glorification. But wherever evil is done and holds the field in the form of sin and wickedness, God is far away, his name does not bring about salvation and sanctity, the rule of Satan spreads, instead of the reign of God's kingdom.

Early Christian times were particularly strict in interpreting the deeper meaning of evil as essentially sin. Later on, the commentators drew attention rather to the effects of sin, to suffering and all that is palpably unpleasant. This is a quite valid and justified interpretation too, even though it does not risk the soaring flights of thought that see all things as God-given, but clings more to what concerns man here on earth. Certainly, the petition means deliverance from suffering, but only in regard to sin, and worshippers should turn their minds to this first, and not merely pray to be delivered from the punishments that follow sin, or the consequences of original sin. From the supernatural point of view we may, and should, pray for deliverance from all sorts of afflictions: temptation, the confusion and darkness of spirit and mind, doubt and error, illness, pain, shattered health, death, poverty, and dereliction, hunger and thirst, excessive heat or cold, need of all kinds, acts of violence, abusive language, murder, injustice, lying, unfaithfulness, enmity, war and all other evils. What immense efforts mankind has made, with science in the van, to render life on earth easier and raise the standard of living! But these endeavors often tackle evil in its appearances only, and not at the source. Whereas attempts to get at the roots of evil, and attack the devil and sin full front on, find little support among the worldly-wise. Indeed, such efforts are more likely to be laughed at than taken seriously, provoking derision till people dismiss them as nonsense. The devil, the author of all evil, has turned into a figure of fun. This accounts for the fact that the real campaign against evil can never really win. Real deliverance from evil depends ultimately on faith, it consists in being delivered from sin, and focuses on the end of time. For as long as we are on earth and

bound to our time system, and Christ's victory over Satan does not shine out clearly into the distance, and sin remains a possibility, then suffering and evil have scope and power on this earth. But as a result of sin man has likewise the opportunity to do penance for sin. At all times, through her teachers the Church has drawn attention to this aspect of suffering, and encouraged her children to bear it patiently. When in his affliction a man has his attention focused on God, he will take it as a refining fire, burning and hurting him, but creating a divine glow in which the sufferer feels that his soul is made purer inwardly, and is acquiring maturity and quality. Thus, cheerful acceptance of suffering is a recurrent theme in the commentaries on the seventh petition, in John Wild, Francis of Sales, J. M. Sailer, and in modern writers. "When the sheep suffer hardship it is good training for them. They will thus be strengthened in faith in God and serve him for the rest of their lives with a pure heart. As soon as they have acquired insight, they will see what they did wrong and will praise God and acknowledge that he is a just judge and that it is reasonable that they suffer, each according to what he did.—And they thank God that they were delivered over to the angel of chastisement. And from then on they have no more evil to suffer." (Shepherd of Hermas.)

The continuation of the seventh petition in Holy Mass centers on the eschatological aspect of the petition. Its relevance to past, present and future evil is insisted on, with the prayer that we may be ever free from sin and its consequences. We should have no doubt about the efficacy of this prayer and that it will be answered. It occupies such an important place, being offered to the Father in heaven by the whole Church in close proximity to the reenacting of the sacrifice of the cross. Christ, the Lamb of God that is sacrificed, lies upon the altar, the separation of Body and Blood indicates his death; the eternal Word of the Father is present to accomplish the bloodless sacrifice with his people. He says with us the seven petitions of

the Lord's Prayer, addressing them to the Father in heaven. He is surrounded by winged angels, saints, the entire Church Triumphant, already enjoying the state of deliverance from evil, praying now with the members of the Church Militant. With the death of our Lord we remember his parting words: "Father,—keep them clear of what is evil." And his word to the thief is realistic, too: "This day thou shalt be with me in paradise." Poor and crucified, he enters into paradise today: in this knowledge, and in full consciousness of his guilt, a Christian implores his Lord: "Look not upon my sins but upon thy Church's faith . . ." and in this faith he proceeds to receive the Eucharistic gifts as pledges of eternal blessedness, cleansing him more and more from the evil of sin and freeing him from the consequences of evil; assuring him of everlasting life, of full possession of spiritual life, of the life of holiness, the contemplation of God face to face, the possession of what no eye has seen, no ear heard, no human heart perceived. All this is deliverance from evil.

All the petitions of the "Our Father" are in view of the end of time. But the nearer this time comes, the more urgent it is to bring these petitions to God. For the evil one, too, is to be particularly strong at that time, trying to prevent its accomplishment and to jeopardize eternal salvation and God's reign. "In the last days, the evil of Satan swooping down upon human souls as they leave life will be particularly great," said Origen. It is thus quite comprehensible when a believer is seized with holy impatience at the point of his deepest suffering, and prays to the Lord "that those days may be cut short."

So the "golden prayer" ends on the same train of thought as the New Testament: with a prayer that the glory of the Lord may soon finally dawn, and deliverance be real and visible. "Deliver us from Evil. Amen."

Maran atha
Be it so, then; come, Lord Jesus. Amen.

At the end of the Lord's Prayer is a final phrase that recapitulates all our petitions and wishes in concentrated brevity. How can anyone stand in fear of the world, when God is beside him as his protector in the world?

CYPRIAN OF CARTHAGE

When in death the soul parts from the body, then the wicked spirits, the executioners in the service of the prince of this world, set upon it to secure it for themselves, rightly or wrongly, according to its behavior on earth. The seventh petition prays in its own mysterious way that this may not happen.

ORIGEN

The devil is appropriately named the wicked one because of his exceeding wickedness, and because he wages relentless warfare against us although we have done nothing to harm him. Therefore the Lord does not say: deliver us from evil things, but, from evil. He thus teaches us never to be indignant with our neighbor, even when we have perhaps to put up with some wrong he does us, but to carry our antagonism over to him who is guilty of all evil.

JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

When God frees us from evil, he does not lead us into temptation; when he does not lead us into temptation, he delivers us from evil.

When we say, "Deliver us from evil," we call to mind that we are not yet in that happy state when we shall endure no more evil. These closing words of the prayer are so significant that whatever is his need, a Christian can send up his yearning in them and shed his tears, and begin with them and linger with them and close his prayer with them. They are words to imprint the truths referred to on our memories.

AUGUSTINE

May he himself, our Lord, deliver us from evil and lead us into all that is good, who lives and reigns now and forever more.

PETER CHRYSOLOGUS

"Deliver us from evil," that means, from the devil, who is the originator and starting point of all evil. The devil's nature used to be heavenly, now it is spiritually wicked; older than the world in time, experienced in doing mischief, much practiced in the art of

wounding, he is no longer merely what is wicked, but the wicked one himself from whom all that is wicked issues. Chained in bodily bonds, man cannot free himself of his own efforts. Therefore we must pray God to free us from the devil, God who gave Christ to the earth to triumph over the devil. Let man call and cry out to God, saying, Deliver us from evil, because from such great evil we can only be delivered by Christ's victory.

ANCIENT COMMENTARY TO HOLY MASS

Deliver us from evil. We beg to be delivered more from invisible than from visible evil. But we chiefly beg to be delivered from that evil which shackles us, that is, from the devil and sin, daily extolled by the devil. But when the prayer reaches its goal, then we are free from all evil. As long as we live in our natural bodies we cannot be free of that evil that harasses the body and bridles the mind. But if what is corruptible puts on incorruptibility, and what is mortal, immortality, then we shall be free from all evil, in the freedom in which Christ made us free. But meanwhile we pray to be freed from the evil of this world, so as not to be oppressed with anxieties and the claims of transient things. Moreover, in this petition we look at past, present and future times all at once, and pray to be delivered from the evil that is behind us, the evil that holds us chained—whether externally or inwardly—and the evil that overshadows our future. For all perishability is bad because it comes from the devil. So when we pray, "Deliver us from evil," we ask to participate in the incorruptibility of future life, in order that we may the more happily pass on to it.

PASCHASIUS RADBERTUS

O Lord, deliver us not from the evil of toil which we here endure; for it is good. Deliver us from the evil that is worse than hell and all devils. We mean by this evil, that we be not parted from thy divine presence.

BERTHOLD VON REGENSBURG

He does not say, deliver us from affliction, but, from evil. For the crowns of saints are made up of afflictions; they boast of their afflictions: "We are confident even over our afflictions, knowing well that affliction gives rise to endurance" (Rom. 5:3).—God frees man from evil and afflictions by turning them to good; that is the token of his great wisdom.

THOMAS AQUINAS

In the seventh petition we acknowledge allegiance to another kingdom, in which there is no evil but only the highest true, pure good; we acknowledge that deliverance from evil signifies deliverance from this illusory, malicious, deceptive world and long for the glory of the eternal good, in which alone we can be delivered from all evil. For outside eternal glory, pure, incorruptible, enduring good has no place.—

If you would know what eternal bliss is, so great that no man can grasp it, you will find that eternal bliss cannot be better understood by us than in the way Christ teaches us here. For this bliss is deliverance from evil. Would you know what hell is? Christ teaches you that hell is an eternal imprisonment in evil. Deliverance from evil is the highest bliss, non-deliverance or imprisonment in evil is the deepest grief and pain.

NICHOLAS OF CUES

Deliver us from evil, that is, from all incitement and all opportunity to sin, from the painful evils which we endure on account of original sin, from all dangers and every obstacle to salvation.

DENIS THE CARTHUSIAN

In the seventh petition of the holy "Our Father," we pray for patience. Our Lord did not teach to us pray: "Guard us from evil," or "Turn evil away from us," but we are to pray that God deliver us from evil.

If we want to be blessed, we dare not take pains to steer clear of unpleasantness in earthly life. According to St. Thomas, God delivers man from evil, first of all, by not burdening or threatening him with more unpleasantness, more persecutions and trials, than he can endure and overcome.—Secondly, God delivers man from evil in that with the unpleasantness he gives him spiritual consolation in his heart, enabling him to stand the ordeal cheerfully, as though nothing had happened. To some hearts God gives the consolation of being able to say: Almighty God, what I suffer is only fair, I deserved it through my sins, I will gladly endure it here, so that I shall not need to endure it in the other world.—Thirdly, God delivers man from evil in that he turns to good the unpleasant occasions he has to put up with here on earth and transforms them into joy. He is almighty. If today things are at their worst, tomorrow he may change them for the best.

MARK OF WEIDA

This petition prays for deliverance from all evils and punishments, as holy Church does in the litanies:

Deliver us, O Father, from thy eternal wrath,
from eternal torments,
from thy severe judgment in death and on the
day of the Last Judgment,
from sudden and unexpected death.

Preserve us from the power of water, fire lightning and hail,
from hunger, war and murder,
from all evils of the body!

JOHN GASTIUS

The seventh petition refers to all misfortune, ignorance, despondency, terror, despair of God's goodness, disgrace, outrage, sin, persecution, war, famine, plague, poisoned air, violent storm, conflagration, frost, unexpected death, hell, and so on.—We do not pray that these things should not come upon us, but that they do not do us harm in body or soul.

JOHN DIETENBERGER

In the seventh petition we must pray above all for faith, for love and knowledge of God. When these are present, outside evils can do us no harm. But if they are not present, earthly goods are no good to us either. To ask God for wealth, health and such like rather than faith and love, is therefore to sin. The meaning of this petition is, then:

Eternal Father, who hast accepted us as thy sons, grant that we may return to thee as thy sons. We know that sufferings come from thy good will; we know that they are of service to us, but we know our weaknesses too, through which we often fall into sin. Thus we pray thee to turn evils aside, as it pleases thee, or to grant us thy grace, with the help of which we triumph over evil.

JOHN WILD

Almighty Father, thy gracious favor has once for all purified us from sin and freed us from the unclean father of devils, through Jesus Christ, to the honor of thy name admitting us to the status of children and heirs. For as long as we linger on earth we are in perpetual conflict with the enemy, who envies us thy favor and stops at nothing in his efforts to regain his hold on us. When we

think of a father-relationship with him, we shudder; with him we should be under the domination of sin; and likewise when we recall to what accursed heritage we were doomed as unholy servants of this lord. We know, too, of his stiff-necked wickedness; he uses not only power but artifice and cunning to bring about our perdition. He never sleeps, never desists, but prowls about roaring like a hungry lion, capturing, hunting, seeking whom he may devour. Father, his being is most unlike thine. Thou art of thy nature good and beneficent, thou bearest the strayed sheep back to the fold, thou healest sickness, thou callest the dead back to life, thou comest thyself in love to those who blaspheme thy holy name and dost invite them in to eternal life. But he, the other, is filled with unabatable hatred toward us, though we never did him any harm, and he is not to be distracted till he has drawn down as many as possible with him into perdition. He is known for all sorts of wickednesses and though he perverts none without his consent, he injures him beforehand by underhand means. His evil ways are a menace specially to those whom thou hast taken under thy protection. Thou didst not make him by nature so, but he lapsed into evil after becoming self-sufficing and refusing submission to thy Majesty. Then envy moved him and with craft and cunning he drove our first parents into death, envying them the joys of paradise after depriving himself of heavenly blessedness. And still today he burns with tremendous pangs of envy because thou hast called to heaven those who were shut out of paradise, because thou hast invited to blessed immortality those who were enslaved to death, through faith in Jesus thy Son, for thou thyself dost turn his wickedness to thy greater honor and to our salvation. May thy love console us the more profoundly, the more that other one breaks out in multiplied wickednesses. . . Thy love can do more for our salvation than all his wickednesses for our perdition. We acknowledge our weaknesses, but we do not blench at the attacks of the enemy, whether we live or die, so long as we have thee for our protector. We do not fear that wicked one's power to pervert, so long as we cling to the Good One.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM

This last petition with which God's Son closed this prayer is the epitome of all the petitions. To stress its significance and weightiness, he used precisely the same close to his prayer when before his death he prayed God for the salvation of men, saying:

"I am asking that thou shouldst keep them clear of what is evil" (John 17:15). For when we have obtained what is contained in this petition, there is nothing left for us to ask for.

ROMAN CATHECHISM

It appears to me that our Savior very rightly addressed this petition to his Father for himself. We can see indeed how weary of life he must have been when at the Last Supper he said to his apostles: "I have longed and longed to share this paschal meal with you." As this was the last meal of his life, he could not more clearly say how bitter life was to him and with what yearning he longed for death. But, oh dear, nowadays those who have lived a whole century are not yet tired of it and still do not want to die. True, no one lives so poor and so overloaded with work and troubles as our worshipful Redeemer. And indeed, with the passion prepared for him constantly in his mind what was his whole life but a continual death? And this was but the least of his torments. His greatest pain was due to the many offenses committed against his Father, and the many souls who got lost. . . . What a right he had to implore his Father to save him from so many evils and pains and take him up into the everlasting peace of his kingdom, of which he was the true heir. Thus he closes with the words, Amen, that is, So may it be. With this Amen with which he closes the whole prayer our divine Redeemer seems to me to be praying to his heavenly Father for us, too, so that we may be freed from all evil forever.

So I pray thee, O eternal Father, from the bottom of my heart, to save me forever from all evil, and I pray thee the more earnestly for this, because I see indeed that instead of paying my debts, I become more deeply involved in them every day. But, O Lord, it is unbearable for my soul not to know for certain that I love thee and that my longing pleases thee. O my Creator and my God, free me now already from all evil and lead me to where all is happiness. For what should those hope for here below to whom thou hast given some knowledge of the nothingness of the world, and whose lively faith gives them some idea of what thou hast in store for them in heaven?

TERESA OF AVILA

The wicked, cunning, base archfiend, that sorry Satan, never rests but pursues us with all diligence, with craft and treachery to the death, preying on us like a roaring lion to swallow us up and

bring us to ruin. How can the world of our weakness withstand such a lord and foe and remain undamaged? Therefore help and guard us, O powerful helper in need and sure Redeemer. Remove all outward afflictions from us, such as disease, poverty, plague, famine, war, rioting, weather-storms and all accidents, whether present or future, that may oppress and afflict us. Or if it be thy gracious will, kind Father, that we should bear the cross with thine elect, and come into misery and distress, hunger, discord, want and death, then grant us thy grace and strength for it, that we do not give in and lose heart, but make us patient, generous and faithful, so that we may accept thy good fatherly will with thankfulness. Therefore we poor, unworthy children pray that thy fatherly devotion may protect us from the eternal pain, misery and damnation that are the portion of impenitent sinners. From such lamentation and fire of hell deliver us, so that we may never be separated from thee, the living source of all good, but after this present misery may see, love and praise thee forever in thy heaven of abundant joys, our home.

PETER CANISIUS

Sin alone is evil, and were sins not here,
One could look forever, no evil would appear.

ANGELUS SILESIVS

First, deliver us from the evil of guilt, through which thou, O God, our highest good, hast been offended. If it is compatible with thy honor and our salvation, deliver us also from the evil of punishment, deliver us from over-great melancholy, from dishonor, war, hunger, disease, want, and all that we deserve to suffer on account of our sins. And finally inscribe us in the company of those who enjoy thee, the highest good, in heaven forever; "What else does heaven hold for me, but thyself? What pleasure should I find in all thy gifts on earth?—Still God will comfort my heart, God will be, eternally, my inheritance."

Amen. That means, may it be so, as we prayed. May our prayer be fulfilled through thy inmost mercies, through the merits of thy Son and through the love of the Holy Spirit.

WILLIAM NAKATENUS

We must leave it to thy wisdom to deal with us according to thy goodness. But this much thy children may say outright: Father, if

it is good for us, if it pleases thee, ease this pain, heal this wound, quench this fire, bless this needy one, strengthen this weak one, feed this hungry one, give drink to this thirsty one, clothe this naked one!

JOHN MICHAEL SAILER

O heavenly Father, grant us through our dear Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to be free at last from the sins and suffering with which we have to struggle here below, and to enter into everlasting bliss as thy perfect children.

JOHN BAPTIST VON HIRSCHER

From early times the exact meaning of the term "from evil" has been much discussed. It can be understood in three ways:

The first possible meaning is: "From the wicked man." Thus St. Matthew, 12:35, speaks of "the wicked man" who from his store of wickedness can utter nothing but what is evil. . . .

A second possibility is the neutral explanation, as for instance in St. Augustine a meaning that through him gained validity throughout the Western Church: "When we say, deliver us from evil, we remind ourselves to consider that we are not yet in what is good, where we endure no evil." "Evil" is here either the work that man is fearful of completing, or the condition in which he is forced to live, or finally the power from whose influence God would save him who prays. . . .

A third possibility is to take the phrase as referring to the devil. Calling the devil "the evil one" is not supported by Old Testament and Judaic witnesses, but is the more so by the New Testament. In the elucidation of the parable of the sower, Matthew has, the evil one comes; Mark, Satan comes; Luke, the devil comes. . . .

ERNST LOHMEYER

The seventh petition is the petition of the lost, of those in need of deliverance. It is the petition for what is ultimate, for what is great and whole, it is the petition for the end of all ends, for perfection.

WALTER LÜTHY

"Evil" is what comes out of sin: disease, want, suffering, misfortune, death.

All praying that God will take evil away from us is within the scope of providence and presumes what providence presumes, care for God's kingdom.

Grant that this appalling vicious circle be broken, with evil incessantly coming out of wickedness and wickedness giving rise to new evil. It can be broken, as an act of the heart that gives itself to God and with him proceeds to accept its trouble for his will's sake.

At the close of the Apocalypse a cry arises from those gathered around the throne: "Come, Lord Jesus!" At the heart of the petition, "deliver us from evil," there sounds the same call. Incessantly, from innumerable hearts, there rises to God a petition the deeper meaning of which hardly occurs to many; but deep it is of a purpose, darkly surging up among them, from the very depths of God's creation that "groans in a common travail all the while," waiting for the Last Things to come about. This depth it is that cries out in this petition.

ROMANO GUARDINI

As far as its content goes, the seventh petition is not merely repetition of the sixth in positive form, it concerns complete deliverance from evil as such. But without doubt the stress is first of all on moral evil; for this alone is the real evil in the world, because it separates man from God and results in his exclusion from salvation. Complete ransom from this evil is, however, synonymous with the coming of God's reign, and thus the close of the "Our Father" takes us back to its beginning, "thy kingdom come." The last petition also has an eschatological sense.

JOSEPH SCHMID

Deliverance from wickedness will not be quite completed in this world, but only when Christ returns to establish God's reign, the kingdom of his Father, manifest in glory. Thus the "Our Father" ends with the most utter longing of Christian hearts, the longing for the coming of Christ, when the Redemption which he effected as incarnate Man will be gloriously and irresistibly completed. It is longing for the overcoming of all earthly inadequacy through God's powerful action, when his eternal Majesty will create a new heaven and a new earth to shine forth in his presence.

ALFONS HEITZ

At the extreme limits to which we have already fled, let it not be that the wicked one resume his power over our soul. Thy will alone be done, not ours; we should not judge, but only take care that we belong to thy kingdom and are not detached from by means of any extraneous desire at all. We ought not to forget that the people in the adversary's following received a soul from thee, a soul that now suffers namelessly. Guard us from letting our love for thy kingdom involve us in hatred, playing into the enemy's hands. Deliver us from ever-present evil, the old original evil, and tempt us not by a super-abundance of suffering which our faith may not be able to bear.

REINHOLD SCHNEIDER

At the peak of all evil is death. It is the gathering-point of all that oppresses our life and crushes it to submit to the last mighty stroke. The shadow of this evil lies over our life and drives us into greater anxiety than any other single evil. Here it is not a matter of staunchly looking the other way, or not taking a thing too seriously. Death is so hideous and so relentless that we would come to utter grief could we not pray: Deliver us from evil.—The greatest evil is the occasion for the greatest act of God. In no evil is the temptation of the world—or let us say the devil—so powerful and so cunning that it can compel us to fall. . . . If we pray, Deliver us from evil, then death is included with all the rest, then we are thrown back upon the Last Things of life and death; then we should be cheerful, consoling ourselves with the thought that the Lord, of his grace, takes us out of this vale of lamentation to himself in heaven.

FROM THE "JUNGENWACHT"

This petition includes the problem of suffering. Suffering can serve as a test, a testing of a man's moral power, his honesty, his loyalty, his imperturbable love. Suffering is the soil in which virtue blossoms most gloriously.

If a man undergoing such trials does not trust to himself and other men but seeks refuge and strength in God, he will be purified by suffering and enriched by it, he gains beauty and nobility, richness and steadfastness, and will at last be ready and worthy to be cloaked in that splendor which is one day to be manifest in God's children.—Suffering is a great grace and true salvation. Were there no suffering, we should attach no importance to sin,

were there no suffering, we should attach no importance to God's mercy, we should attach no importance to the promise of a more lovely and enduring home.

HUGO LANG

From the evil of lack of good will deliver us.
From the evil of mistrust of one another deliver us.
From the evil of estrangement from one another deliver us.
From the evil of lording it over one another deliver us.
From the evil of uncertainty about one another deliver us.
From the evil of indifference to one another deliver us.
From the evil of feeling hopeless about unity deliver us.
From all that, once more we pray, holy Father, deliver us.

P. S. PAULESER

The world as such is ransomed from evil by Christ's sacrificial act, and we dare pray to have part in the fruit of this sacrificial act. But our portion will not be bestowed on us without our cooperation; we must ourselves place ourselves on the side of good in the fight with evil.

Deliver us from evil!—deliver us from fear in the face of evil!
Deliver us from sympathizing with evil!

BERNARD MARTIN

What do you make of the "evils" from which you want to be delivered? Are you sure they really are evil, measured by ultimate standards, by *mine*? They may well be, and that is why I want you to pray. But can you give a final verdict, or ought you to leave it to me? To take your prayers at their real worth, which you do not properly admit even to yourself, are you not saying, "Give me bread, give me health, security, and peace, and O, *then* I will serve thee, then I will love thee, fervently and loyally!" But did you do so, when you had bread and a quiet life? Or was your bread and life not itself an "evil," because it distracted you from me, an evil from which my towering loving-kindness had to rescue you, in order that you should find your salvation? No, if you did indeed bring needs and evils into my presence in prayer—real or imaginary ones—really brought to me, the holy, everlasting One, and were not in your prayer simply conducting a monologue of blind egoism with yourself, this can discover if your petition turns into a question to me, the question put to my inscrutable wisdom and

eternal goodness: What is better for me, want or good fortune, success or failure, life or death? If your petition does not turn into this question at the moment of penetrating to the silent ineffability of my eternal plans, it is a sign that you are not praying but are remonstrating with the Majesty of your God, to whom worship is due precisely when you are praying for help in the distress of your earthly existence.

KARL RAHNER

AMEN

"Amen," that sounds well indeed, when in church all different ages and conditions of men join in together like the harmonious sound of numbers of stringed instruments, when the Psalms are sung with alternate verses and then comes the closing word, Amen.

AMBROSE

O Lord, it is of little use for me to say Amen and wish that it be so, if thou dost not say Amen and command: Be it so! O glorious potent word: Be it so! With this word, O sublime Father, thou didst in the beginning, that is, in thy co-eternal Word, create all things; thou didst speak, and all things came into being. In this Word thou hast restored us, who were lost, when our holy "restorer" said to the angel: Be it done to me according to thy word. O saving word! Be it so. O Amen! O Fiat! O word of all power, word wonderful in efficacy. My Good Lord Jesus, thou Word of the Father: Complete thou my prayer, complete thou my words, which issued from thee and were commended to me, complete them, saying, Amen. Saying: So be it done. Speak to me as thou didst speak to that woman: Be it done to thee as thou dost wish.

LUDOLF OF SAXONY

The Hebrew word "Amen" was so often said by our Savior that by inspiration of the Holy Spirit it has been preserved in God's Church. Its meaning can be defined thus, more or less: "Know that thy prayer is heard." It is likewise God's answer, who after granting his requests dismisses his suppliant in grace. This view is confirmed by the established use of the word in holy Mass, where the Church does not have the Amen to the "Our Father" said by the altar server but reserves it for the priest to say. Thus as intermediary between God and men he gives answer to the people saying, God has heard your prayer. . . . But when we have the word to say, it underlines the preceding petitions.

ROMAN CATECHISM

The "Amen" is a formula which has passed without translation from the Old Testament liturgy into the language used for wor-

ship in the New Testament, where it appears at least fifty times, mostly in adverbial form by way of assertion and emphasis, or as ejaculatory prayer, or close to a prayer, and a few times as a proper noun. It is a clear, lovely word and likewise a convincing proof of the good influence of the liturgy on language, building it up and enriching its content, as when St. Paul says so inimitably of Christ, that in him is the Amen to all God's promises (II Cor. 1:20).

JOSEPH MARIA NIELEN

The Amen reminds us that true prayer is an act, too. Not an external one, but an act inwardly executed.

All Amen remains worthless when God does not say it. A man says "forever"—and already life is at work crumbling this "forever" away and in course of time it collapses. . . . Amen says, "I am wholly for it" and does not think that already currents of his being are running in other directions, undermining his statement, and one day there he stands and does not know how it happened. . . . Amen is struck and shaken and fulfilled, and believes that some absolute has taken possession of him—but life follow its course, and events, pains, vexations, a breath of wind, a bird's song sweep that once so powerful thing aside and then comes a day when it is all over, and a man no longer grasps how he could believe he had a share in enduring things.

ROMANO GUARDINI

The Amen with which we seal the Lord's Prayer signifies the resolute determination with which we wish to take the great concerns of the kingdom, the sovereignty of God, as the guiding star of our life. "The Kingdom of heaven has opened to force, and the forceful are even now making it their prize" (Matt. 11:12). It does not come our way unless we draw it to us, taking up the wager of faith and with all our heart, with all our mind and all our strength answering God's call to us: Amen, So be it.

ALFONS HEITZ

"Amen" is a liturgical acclamation in Christian service and likewise in the heavenly service of God, where four living figures answer the cry of praise of the whole of creation with "Amen," just as the people confirm the prayers and thanksgiving of their representative with "Amen."

Amen is the close of Christian prayers and doxologies; as such

it is a part of the prayer. The inward meaning of "Amen" is "Yes." It is the answer of the Ecclesia to a divine "Yes." The "Amen" is the acknowledgment of the divine promise, on account of which the petition can be made. The "Amen" of the congregation makes God's "Yes" valid on their behalf. Likewise the meaning of "Amen" can be seen in the second Epistle to the Corinthians: "It was Jesus Christ, the Son of God, that we preached to you; and that preaching did not hesitate between Yes and No; in him all is affirmed with certainty. In him all the promises of God become certain" (II Cor. 1:19-20). God's Yes is in Christ, the fulfillment of his promises, and therefore it is through him (through the Church) that the "Amen" will ring out, the answer of the people to God's Yes, and God's Yes is firmly among them. Thus Christ himself can be called "Amen." His answer to God's Yes is himself. And it is in acknowledging and obediently responding to God's Yes, which he is himself, that he is the dependable and true witness of God.

The placing of an "Amen" before Jesus' own words is a sign that they are sure and can be depended on.

HEINRICH SCHLIER

TO CLOSE

Father of light, of life and of all being, Father of the angels, the saints and the just, Father of all men. Father of the wild creatures and of all living creatures, Father of silent, lifeless creation too. And before all else, Father, of the one, true, eternal Son Jesus Christ, who has bound us together in one people and one adoption. With his lips, in his words, in his mind we offer up our prayer to thee:

Our Father who art in heaven

Thou art near to us and good, and yet thou dwellest in the unapproachable light of thy majestic holiness. Immaculate, intact and aglow from within in the illumination of thy holy Godhead. We pray thee, for the sake of thy glory:

Hallowed be thy name

Hallowed, honored and worshipped by all creatures. Hallowed in obedience, hallowed in love, hallowed in the knowledge that only one is good—thou, O Lord. Hallowed by thy holy Church, into whose charge thou hast committed the honor of thy name and thy praise and the worship of thy glory in spirit and in truth.

Thy kingdom come

May the truth come to us and the knowledge that thou alone art worthy to possess all power and to be God. May thy reign come, and faith in thee be over us, and submission and worship be ours. May thy grace and love come to us, and fellowship and peace. May thy Holy Spirit come to us, with his fervor and loving-kindness. May thy Son come to bring the world to an end, to complete his salvation and subject all things to thy rule, so that thou shalt be all in all.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven

Thy will is the better one. Indeed, as far as heaven is above the earth, so far is thy wisdom above our wisdom and thy ways above

our ways. Thy will be done, as and when and where it please thee. For thy will is salvation, ransom and mercy, whether thou dost strike or protect, judge or heal. Take our freedom to thyself, we give it to thee for thee to administer freely in the wisdom of thy divine counsels. Thy will be done, but through us too. We want to attend to thy will as thy holy angels do, we want to grasp it, we want to proclaim it, we want to defend it, we want to stand up for it, fighting and triumphant in thy power. Thy will be done, which is truth and justice, goodness and love. Thy will be our food, our way and our goal. Thy will be our longing and our fulfillment.

Give us this day our daily bread

For our body is part of the earth and needs the nourishment that thou dost give us. How could thy creatures live if thou, the bestower of food and all good things, were not sustaining them all the time? Praise be to thee for bread and all that is on our table to be eaten. Teach us to give it to those who are in need of it. Satisfy the hungry. Give us all daily bread for body and soul.

And forgive us our trespasses

Is there a more earnest petition for the salvation of the soul, once we have grasped that thou art holy? O goodness welling up, how empty our life is in thy presence! O overflowing, never-failing love, how can we exist beside thee? And when we think of our sins, who could remain near thee? Have mercy on us, O Lord, according to thy great mercy, as we too want to have mercy.

As we forgive them that trespass against us

As we are condemned, dispossessed, poor, and living on thy mercy have nothing of our own to set before thee, may at least this sign of comprehension and thanksgiving be visible in thy presence, may we pass on to our brothers the mercy which thou hast bestowed on us. Teach us to forgive whole-heartedly.

And lead us not into temptation

Yes, so must we pray, even when we have received thy mercy, have been accepted by thee and become thy children, secure in thy love. For no one who is called by thee dare say he is already saved.

Lead us not into the temptation to which thy Apostle Peter succumbed, nor the one which made Judas a traitor. Lead us not into temptation through excess of happiness or excess of pain, for which our impure fickle hearts are too weak.

But deliver us from evil

From the evils of body and soul, from all evils in church, family, nation. Deliver us from evil, as far as it is possible here below in this world. Deliver us from all evil once, in a good death. Deliver us above all in the holy return of thy Son, when the world shall be judged, Satan repudiated, wickedness uprooted, when all good shall blossom, when the treasures of the nations shall be borne into thy Holy City, when thou shalt dry every tear and there will be no more mourning nor sorrow nor pain. When thou shalt take all things under thy blessed reign and wilt be our very great reward.

Amen. Be it so, then. Amen.

CLEMENT TILMANN

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